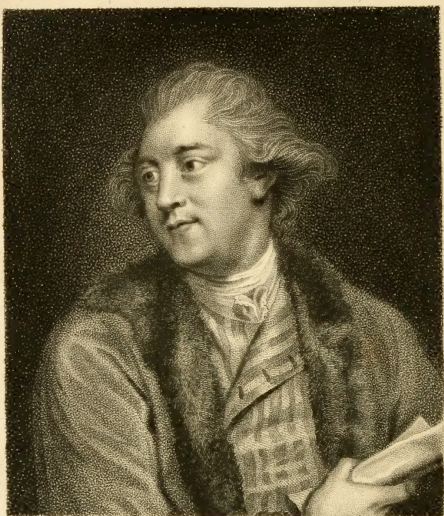






THE
POEMS OF OSSIAN, &c.



St. Joe Reynolds pinx.

Froman sculp.

James Macpherson Esq.

Published by Longman & Co May 27th 1805.

THE
POEMS OF OSSIAN,
&c.

CONTAINING THE
POETICAL WORKS

OF
JAMES MACPHERSON, Esq.

IN
PROSE AND RHYME:
WITH NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

BY
MALCOLM LAING, Esq.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

EDINBURGH:

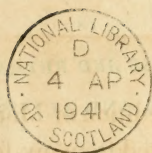
PRINTED BY JAMES BALLANTYNE,
FOR ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE AND CO. EDINBURGH;
LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME, CADELL AND DAVIES,
AND J. MAWMAN, LONDON.

1805.

POEMS OF OSSIAN.

PREFACE

POTENTIAL WORKS



The first of these is the *Book of the Dean of Lismore*, which has long been regarded as the most important of the poems of Ossian. It was first printed in 1761, and since that time it has been the subject of many editions. I have now had the opportunity to examine the original, and to compare it with the various editions. I found that the original is in a very good state of preservation, and that the text is very accurate. I have therefore been able to reproduce the original text as faithfully as possible. I have also added some notes, which I hope will be of use to the reader. I have also added some illustrations, which I hope will be of interest to the reader. I have also added some other material, which I hope will be of interest to the reader. I have also added some other material, which I hope will be of interest to the reader.

PREFACE

BY

THE EDITOR.

THE present edition of Macpherson's poetry, has originated from my former Dissertation on the supposed authenticity of Ossian's Poems. When that dissertation was first published, I continued occasionally to collect and note the imitations in Ossian, till the margin of my copy was filled with quotations; and before the Highland Society had announced an edition of the Earse original, I had determined to publish the originals myself. For that purpose, a more critical and minute examination was bestowed upon the

poems, in the course of which every simile, and almost every poetical image, were traced to their source : the quotations were either reduced, or extended, to a series of notes, in which controversy, in general, was carefully avoided ; and if our modern Ossian has acquired the rank of a classical poet, these notes will form no unnecessary commentary, to point out the real originals from which the poems were derived.

Instead of a formal dissertation on those marks of poetical imitation which a learned critick has so well explained¹, it is sufficient to observe, that in Ossian there are some hundred similes and poetical images, which must either be original, or derived from imitation. If the poems are authentick, they *must* be original ; and their casual coincidence with other poetry can possess only such a vague resemblance, as that of Virgil's Pollio to the prophesies of Isaiah. If the poems, however, are not authentick,

¹ See Hurd on the Marks of Poetical Imitation.

these similes and poetical images must be derived from the classicks, scriptures, and modern poetry, with which the author's mind was previously impregnated, and, however artfully disguised, they may be traced distinctly to their source.

And conversely again, if these similes and poetical images are original, the authenticity of the poems can admit of no contradiction; if, on the contrary, they are derived from imitation, all the attestations and oaths in the Highlands would fail to establish the authenticity of Ossian. The present commentary professes, therefore, not merely to exhibit parallel passages, much less instances of a fortuitous resemblance of ideas, but to produce the precise originals from which the similes and images are indisputably derived.

The arrangement of the three first editions is preserved, as the order in which the poems were written leads occasionally to some curious detections. But the text of the cor-

X rected edition of 1773 is adopted throughout, and the additions are carefully marked and distinguished by Italics, though the alterations are too numerous and minute to be noted. Not only Macpherson's historical dissertations, but many of his notes, are rejected, as full of falsehood; and Blair's critical dissertation is also omitted, as it can do no honour now to his memory.

In the course of my enquiries, I have discovered above four thousand of Macpherson's verses, written between the age of seventeen and twenty-two, while he *sacrificed, or served his apprenticeship in secret to the muses*. His earliest poem is in blank verse, and entitled Death; the second is a heroic poem, which may be stiled the Hunter; both written at the age of eighteen, and discovered in the Highlands in his own hand-writing. The Highlander, his next heroic poem, was published in 1758. Other verses, marked with his initials, were occasionally inserted in the Scots and Edinburgh

Magazines; and in a Collection of Original Poetry, by Blacklock and other Scots gentlemen, (Edinburgh 1760,) a series of anonymous poems must be appropriated to Macpherson. These poems, of which some are highly descriptive, and others again sentimental, are authenticated by the repetition of the same expressions and imagery in Ossian; but at present, the chief value of Macpherson's verses consists in the evidence which they afford, that his first, and most predominating ambition was to become a heroic poet.

From this early bias, the fabrication of the poems, ascribed to Ossian, may be distinctly explained. In the correspondence just published by the Highland Society, Dr Adam Ferguson tells us², that he had in-

² Report of the Committee of the Highland Society, on the authenticity of Ossian. Appendix, p. 63. In writing this preface I had not seen the report itself, but I rested with Mr Mackenzie upon the evidence con-

formed his friend, Mr John Home, of certain ancient poems preserved in the Highlands; one of which, containing the arrival or landing of a host, and a subsequent battle, with a single combat of two chiefs, he himself had committed to writing, about the year 1740, from the recitation of a journeyman tailor at his father's house. Though not in possession of the copy when *Fingal* was published, he had no doubt or difficulty in recognizing the same passage in the arrival of Swaran, and the single combat with Cuthullin; as a proof of which, he quotes two passages from memory; the first relating to the hosts engaged, when correctly printed, thus,

tained in the Appendix, which had been communicated to me in MS. some years ago, and which I pronounced at first sight a sufficient detection of the whole imposture. See *Dissertation on the supposed authenticity of Ossian's Poems.*—*Hist. Scot.* iv. 468-93, 2d edit.

Jommaid colan, iommaid triath
 Jommaid sciath is luireach gharibh.

“ Many a coat of mail (was there), many a hero, many a shield, many a great breast-plate.”

And the second to the chiefs who grappled, and in whose struggle,

Bha clochan agus talamh trom
 Amosgladh faoi bhon an coss.

“ There were stones and heavy earth opening beneath the soles of their feet ³.”

The venerable Dr Ferguson, however, will be surprised to learn, that these passages are not to be found in Fingal, nor indeed in Macpherson's Ossian ; but that the identical words are contained in the Irish ballad of *Ossian agus an Clerich*, or the combat of Fingal and Magnus ; the only poem con-

³ I find the same passage from the ballad of Magnus, recited from memory, as a fragment of Ossian, by Mr Gallie, another witness upwards of fourscore. *Mr Mackenzie's Report*, p. 39.

cerning an invasion, a battle, and a combat between two chiefs, which the Doctor took down from a tailor's recitation.

And now "the moon takes up the wondrous tale." In Autumn 1759, Doctor Carlyle⁴, and Mr John Home, met Macpherson, with his pupil, at Moffat. Mr Home, in consequence of his previous information from Dr Ferguson, enquired concerning the remains of Earse poetry, and was told by Macpherson, that several pieces of ancient poetry were then in his possession. When the former desired to see them, the latter asked, (as usual) if he understood the Gaelic. "Not one word." "How then can I shew them to you?" "Very easily," said Mr Home; "*translate* one of the poems which you think a *good one*; and I imagine, that I shall be able to form some opinion of the genius and character of the Gaelic poetry." Such an application from a dramatic poet, so distin-

⁴ Appendix to Mr Mackenzie's Report, p. 66.

guished then as the author of Douglas, must have been secretly acceptable and gratifying to an obscure tutor like Macpherson, whose Highlander had sunk unnoticed from the press, and whose name was still unknown among men of letters. After a coy resistance, he was persuaded to comply ; and in a day or two, he produced the Fragment on the death of Oscar ⁵, which of all others, is the most demonstratively a forgery, and which Macpherson himself was obliged to appropriate afterwards to another Oscar, the son of Caruth ⁶. When the very first poem, produced by Macpherson, is an almost avowed fabrication, it is evident, that on finding the genuine Earse ballads unfit for translation, he could not resist the temptation to vindicate that neglected merit of which he was conscious, by submitting his own poetry, which the public had hitherto overlooked, to a distinguished judge as a

⁵ Id. p. 69.

⁶ See vol. II. of this edition, p. 46, note.—p. 393, note.

relique of antiquity. In a few days he produced two or three other fragments, with which Mr Home returned in triumph to Edinburgh.

The *literati* of Edinburgh, to whom the Fragments were communicated, considered only their poetical merit. A treasure hid for ages was received with avidity. Copies were transmitted to Gray and Shenstone; and as no enquiry was made concerning the originals, it appears that the antiquity of the fragments was implicitly admitted, because they teemed with the sentimental cant which was then in vogue. Dr Blair, in particular, “struck with the high spirit of poetry that breathed in them,” was industrious to procure other fragments from Macpherson, who affected to translate with reluctance, pretending that “no versions of his could do justice to the spirit and force of the original⁷ ;” but his secret objection was very differently explained to a confidential friend; namely, “that his Highland

⁷ Appendix to Mr Mackenzie's Report, p. 57.

pride was alarmed at appearing *only as a translator* to the world⁸." Startled, perhaps, at the magnitude and danger of the imposture, he endeavoured, at this period, to get released from his engagements to Blair, who, after much and repeated importunity, procured translations of the remaining fragments, "by representing the injustice that would be done to his native country, in keeping concealed those hidden treasures, which, if brought forth, would serve to enrich the whole learned world⁹." Accordingly, the Fragments were published in June 1760, with a preface, which Blair

⁸ " I well know, that his (Macpherson's) first attempts were encouraged by Dr Blair; and I have in my custody several letters from Macpherson, soliciting me to be *released from his promise* of collecting and transmitting to the learned Doctor the few Fragments first published; and one great argument he used against the printing them was, *That his Highland pride was alarmed at appearing to the world only as a translator.*" Letter from the late Mr George Laurie, minister of Loudon, January 18, 1782.

⁹ Mr Mackenzie's Report; appendix, p. 56.

penned from the information supplied by Macpherson, and in which he begins with assuring the public, that “they may depend on the following fragments, as genuine remains of ancient Scottish poetry ;” without once reflecting that the pretended translator was himself a poet.

Macpherson, a heroic poet from the very beginning, had artfully represented to Blair, what was now fully announced in the preface, that if suitable encouragement were given, an epic poem of considerable length might be recovered in the Highlands. Specimens of the poem were inserted in the Fragments ; and, at a literary dinner, a subscription for the recovery of this lost epic ¹⁰ was proposed

¹⁰ Blair writes thus to Lord Hailes; “I intended to have waited on you this day, (but was hindered by some accident) that we might have had some conversation about any scheme that can be fallen upon, for encouraging Mr Macpherson to apply himself to the making a further collection of Earse poetry, and particularly for recovering *our epic*. As the specimens are so highly relished, dont you think, that a pretty considerable

with such spirit, that Macpherson's hesitation and doubts of success were at once surmounted¹¹. A considerable subscription was raised among the advocates and men of letters; and Macpherson was dispatched that same summer, on a poetical mission to the Highlands and Isles. When he returned in winter, laden with the hidden treasures of Celtic literature, he spent his time, as he said, in translation; and the Irish manuscripts which he certainly collected, and which are probably still extant, appeared to those who were unable to read them, to be satisfactory because they were old, and much sullied with smoke and snuff¹². In

collection might be made for bearing his expences? &c." June 23d. (1760).

¹¹ Mr Mackenzie's Report. Appendix, 58.

¹² Report 80. Appendix, 59. 65. Blair informs us, "that some gentlemen, particularly Professor Adam Ferguson, told me that they did look into Macpherson's papers, and saw some which appeared to them to be old manuscripts; and, that in comparing his version with the original, they found it exact and faithful in

the course of a twelve-month, an epic poem was prepared for the press, and by the advice of his friends he removed to London, where, under the patronage of Lord Bute, *Fingal* and the lesser poems were published by subscription, about the beginning of the year 1762. The *Temora* and the remaining poems were published early in the following year, with inferior success; and in a critical dissertation by Blair on the poems of Ossian, the palm of heroic poesy was indirectly transferred from the Greek, to the Celtic bard.

Such, then, was the origin, and such the progress of those celebrated poems, in which the very first step was an imposition practised upon the easy credulity of Home and Blair. To them the supposed beauties of the Frag-

any parts which they read:" Whereas Doctor Ferguson merely says, that "the fragments I afterwards saw in Mr Macpherson's hands, by no means appeared of recent writing; the paper was much stained with smoke, and daubed with Scotch snuff;" the only proof which he gives of the authenticity of Ossian.

ments were the sole proofs of antiquity ; without even any previous enquiry whether those beauties were really original, or from what sources of imitation they were derived. From the first forgery of the Death of Oscar, Macpherson was conducted, step by step, to other fabrications, by their importunity and zeal ; and encouraged by the unexampled success of the Fragments, especially when compared with the miscarriage of the Highlander, he availed himself dexterously of the enthusiasm of his countrymen to possess a national epopee, and gave them his own compositions under another name, as the genuine productions of a remote antiquity. His different prefaces contain a plain explanation of the fact ; and a careful reservation of his latent claims to the rank and merit of an original poet. “ But indeed he did not affect
“ to conceal from those with whom he was
“ particularly intimate, that the poems were
“ entirely his own composition ; as Sir John

“ Elliot, then an eminent physician in London, informed Dr Percy,” the venerable Bishop of Dromore, whose words I have transcribed, and whose attestation of the fact will be read with pleasure.

“ The Bishop of Dromore has allowed Dr Anderson to declare, that he repeatedly received the most positive assurances from Sir John Elliot, the confidential friend of Macpherson, that all the poems published by him as translations of Ossian, were entirely of his own composition¹³.”

I understand that Macpherson made similar declarations to other friends ; as will appear from the following declaration in particular, by the Rev. Mr Lapslie, minister of Campsie in Scotland.

“ Living at Antwerp in the year 1778, along with the present Sir James Suttie

¹³ Letter from the Bishop of Dromore to Dr Robert Anderson of Edinburgh, dated Dromore-house, April 16, 1805.

“ Bart. of Balgonie, I had an opportunity of
“ being often in the house of General Plun-
“ ket, Governor of the Citadel of Antwerp,
“ an Irish gentleman in the Imperial service.
“ The conversation between him and me
“ sometimes turning upon the poems of Os-
“ sian, General Plunket said, that Mr Mac-
“ pherson had declared to an old and inti-
“ mate companion of his and the General’s,
“ that having given an exceeding good poem
“ to the public, which passed unnoticed, he
“ then published as ancient, some fragments
“ of his own, which were so much applaud-
“ ed, that henceforth he resolved to give the
“ world enough of such ancient poetry.”¹⁴

Campsie, May 18. 1805.

¹⁴ “ Dear sir, Such was General Plunket’s declaration to me. From my total ignorance of the Earse language, I was unable to enter into the controversy with his Excellency ; nor am I able, at this moment, to give my opinion upon the subject, so far as my knowledge of that language, or acquaintance with the manners and customs of the Scotch Highlanders, would entitle me to be heard ; and I even consider it as delicate in me to speak about what a gentleman said, who is long

The remaining evidence for the authenticity of the poems, may require a short examination. In consequence of David Hume's letters, Blair wrote to the Highlands to procure attestations ; and an incoherent mass

since dead, as the friends of Ossian have it not in their power to examine into the truth of what I state. I solemnly assure you, however, that I state nothing but what General Plunket declared to me again and again.

“ I dare not, at this distance of time, say, that I accurately remember the name of that old and intimate companion of General Plunket's, to whom Macpherson made the declaration. But I believe he was some connection of Lord Petre.” I am, &c.

JAMES LAPSLIE,

To M. Laing, Esq.

General Plunket died at Liege, the Christmas thereafter, on his way to Vienna. His information was obtained, in all probability, from the late Dr Alexander Geddes, who had been at Antwerp that year, and who always professed his disbelief of the authenticity of Ossian. But it is observable, that the General knew no more of the Highlander, to which Macpherson alluded, than Mr Lapslie in 1799 did, when he communicated the anecdote accidentally to Mr Wharton, M. P. from whom I received it while writing my dissertation.

of evidence was added to his Dissertation, in an appendix which Macpherson afterwards suppressed. It is necessary to premise, that about twenty or thirty Irish ballads relative to the Fions, and ascribed to Ossian, are preserved in the Highlands by tradition or writing ; but these are short unconnected songs, and are nothing superior, in point of poetical merit, to the popular English ballads concerning king Arthur and Robin Hood. Their origin is certain, as the same poems are preserved more entire in Ireland, to which the names and subjects are all confined, and as they are composed according to the rules of alliteration in Irish prosody, which are seldom or never observed in any Earse poems. Their date must be ascribed to the fourteenth and fifteenth century, not only from internal evidence, but because Irish poetry is not once mentioned in the twelfth century, by Giraldus Cambrensis, in his long panegyrick upon Irish musick, while the songs and tales concerning the Fions are first noticed by Good, a school-

master at Limerick, about the year 1566, and by Carswell, Bishop of the Isles, in the preface to an Earse prayer-book, printed at Edinburgh in 1567¹⁵. In consequence of frequent migrations from Ireland, not only the songs of the Fions, but the tales of the Milesians and Tuath de Danaan, had been then at least introduced into Argyle and the western Highlands, to which the former seem to be still confined.

The names of the heroes, a few occasional incidents and detached passages of the Irish ballads, had been seized by Macpher-

¹⁵ Defunctorum animas in consortium abire existimant quorundam in illis locis illustrium, de quibus fabulas et cantilenas retinent, ut gigantum, Fin Mac Huyle, Osker Mac Oshin, et tales sæpe per illusionem se videre dicunt. Camden's *Hibernia*, from J. Good, who had been educated at Oxford, and was afterwards a schoolmaster and priest at Limerick. "They are more desirous and accustomed to compose vain tempting lying histories concerning Tuath de Danaans, and Milesians, concerning champions and Fin Mac Cumhail, and Fingalians, &c." Pref. to Carswell's *Prayer Book*. Campbell's *Tour through Scotland*.

son, and incorporated into his poems. The Highlanders, therefore, in their answers to Blair, declared to a man, that they had heard and remembered the poems of Ossian from their earliest youth ; and it is impossible, even at present, to make them comprehend, that the identity of the poems is the only question in dispute, and that the Irish ballads, which they remember to have heard, are in fact the strongest confutation of Macpherson's Ossian. We have seen the memory play such fantastick tricks upon the venerable Doctor Ferguson, that, recollecting a story of an invading host, a battle, and the combat of two chiefs, in the ballad of Magnus, he had no difficulty in recognizing the same passages again in Fingal. Such are the attestations of all the Highlanders, to whom the names and occasional incidents, an invasion, a battle, and a single combat, are familiar; and the few facts contained in their evidence, which relate exclusively to the Irish ballads, are ap-

propriated without scruple to Macpherson's Ossian.

Accordingly, in the vague attestations transmitted to Blair, such passages only are specified, as had been adopted by Macpherson from the Irish ballads. The description of Cuthullin's chariot ; the episode of Fainasolis ; Ossian's courtship of Evirallin ; the terms of peace proposed by Morla ; Ullin's war-song ; the standard of Fingal ; the choice of an adversary by each chief, and the single combat between Fingal and Swaran ; the battle of Lora ; DARTHULA ; LATHMON ; the combat between Oscar and Ullin in the Fragments ; the death of Oscar in Temora ; and the lamentations of the spouse of Dargo¹⁶ ; are almost all the pas-

¹⁶ Appendix to Mr Mackenzie's Report, pp. 1. 2. 11. 12. 19. 20. 22. 23. 24. 29. 30. 32. 33. These and the pages cited in note 20. contain the only passages in Ossian that are specified and attested by Blair's correspondents ; but I am sorry to observe, that their letters have not been published entire. One correspondent writes, " As to your queries, I cannot find any manuscripts of Ossian's poems, nor did I ever see

sages which the attestations procured by Blair have specified, as recited or even as remembered in the Highlands. But Cu-

any ; as to the second, I do remember in my early days to have heard the exploits of the Fions recited almost by every body, and I still retain some of what I then heard, particularly relating to Oscar ; but, upon comparison, (I) find the circumstances *differ widely* from what is contained in the printed poems." Letter from Mr Duncan Macfarlane, dated Drumon Manse, November 28. 1763. But why was this conscientious letter suppressed ? Another writes, " I lost no time in making due enquiries about the authenticity of Fingal's poem. I confined my intelligence at first to Strathspey, hoping to find there such information as would satisfy you on the subject ; but, being disappointed in my expectations, I therefore endeavoured to pick up proper information through the counties of Inverness and Ross, at least so far of them as I had access to ; the result of the whole is, that the manners of the people in these northern counties are quite different from what they were half a century ago. People of old were wont to impress upon the minds of their children, the songs of the bards ; but this custom has fallen so much into *désuetude*, that there is scarce to be found any one who can repeat, from memory, the whole of Fingal's poem. Old Rothiemurchus and Dal-

thullin's car is an Irish ballad, containing little more than the names and epithets of the horses. The episode of Fainasolis is an alteration of *Dan na Inghin*, or the Maid's Tragedy, a well known ballad, upon which the Fragment of Oscar's combat with Ullin is also constructed. Ossian's Exploits at Lochlego are taken from the

rachney, desired to be named as vouchers of it. They *remember to have heard it* in their younger days; and they are positive, that Mr Macpherson's edition is the genuine translation of Fingal, a poem that has been transmitted from father to son for a great number of past centuries. I am promised a copy of Fingal in the original: if it proves *agreeable* to my taste and liking, I will in that event transmit it to you by my brother Sandy, who goes to Edinburgh in a few weeks hence." Letter from Lewis Grant, dated Duthil, 26th January, 1764. But this letter has been also suppressed, though Blair (omitting the negative evidence) rests upon Rothiemurchus's and Dalrachney's absurd attestations. Yet the correspondence with Blair is the original evidence, upon which the poems must ultimately depend; and it is curious to compare the meagre evidence contained in the letters, with the magnificent form which it assumes in Blair's appendix.

Suireadh Oisin, or courtship of Evirallin, another Irish ballad. Ullin's war-song is merely a detached panegyric upon Gaul. The terms of peace proposed by Morla, are from the ballad of Magnus; but the terms, as one witness more conscientious than the rest acknowledges, are proposed by Magnus, king of Lochlin, to Fingal, and not by the unheard of Swaran to Cuthullin¹⁷. The standard, or sun-beam of battle, the choice of an adversary by each chieftain, and the single combat between Swaran and Fingal, are all taken from the same ballad of Fingal and Magnus. The battle of Lora is founded on *Teantach mor na Feine* (the greatest danger the Fingalians ever sustained) or, the invasion of Ireland by Erragon, king of Lochlin, of which Macpherson confessedly obtained a copy from Maclaggen¹⁸, but no trace of the battle of Lora has ever been discovered.

¹⁷ Id. 29. Report, 56.

¹⁸ Id. Appendix, 24. 154

Lathmon derives its story from *Lammonmore*, another Irish ballad; Darthula, from Deirdar, and the Children of Uisleachan: the Death of Oscar from *Bhas Oscar*, the sole foundation upon which the Temora is constructed; the lamentation of Dargo's spouse, from *Marbhran Deirg*, a ballad very different from Macpherson's poem; but in these ballads we would search in vain for the address to the moon in Darthula, or for a single poetical image or sentiment almost in Macpherson's Ossian ¹⁹.

The only remaining passages, attested in the correspondence with Blair, are the death of Agandecca, and the story of Orla in Fingal; Gauland Ossian sitting on the green banks of Lubar; a part of the War of Inisthona; the address to the evening star, and the death of

¹⁹ Of these ballads, which Macpherson himself has stigmatized as Irish, the combat of Fingal and Magnus, or *Ossian agus an Clerich*, with others collected by Mr Hill, may be found in the Gentleman's Magazine for 1782-3. Ossian's courtship of Evirallin, the Maid's

Connal in the Fragment of Connal and Crimora²⁰. Neither the death of Agandecca, which was probably mistaken for the Maid's Tragedy, nor the story of Orla, nor any part of the war of Inisthona, has hitherto been discovered; "Then Gaul and Ossian sat on the green banks of Lubar," is an imitation of the 137th

Tragedy, the Lamentation of Dargo's wife, the Tale of Con son of Dargo, *Teantach mor na Feine*, or the Tale of Erragon, the Death of Oscar, collected by Dr Young, may be found in the Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy, vol. I. Cuthullin's car, the Address to Gaul, Lammon-more, Deirdar, the Children of Uisleachan, (of which I possess, or have seen translations) Garibhe Mac Stairn, and a few others, have never been published. An extract from one of the ballads of Deirdar is published from an old MS. by D. Smith, in the Appendix to Mr Mackenzie's Report, p. 290, but not a syllable of Macpherson's Darthula.

²⁰ Id. 2. 23. 29. 30. Something like the beginning of the episode of Agandecca, appears in the appendix to Mackenzie's Report, 219, where Fion is invited and goes to Bergen, (Bheirge) to marry the king of Lochlin's daughter; but the catastrophe is wanting, as well as the names of Starno, Agandecca, &c.

psalm ²¹, of which the witness had some indistinct remembrance ; and the death of *Connal* in single combat with *Dargo*, is attested by the same witness, from a recollection of the Irish ballad of *Con mac an Deirg*, or the tale of *Con*, son of *Dargo*, slain in single combat by Gaul. The Address to the Evening Star, has indeed been attested by Sir John Macpherson, as different from James Macpherson's edition, and as copied (by another gentleman) from an old manuscript, to which Macpherson had no access. Sir John was then a very young man, full of zeal for the supposed honour of his country ; but unless he can produce the manuscript, the world will certainly doubt of its existence, and will prefer the positive and repeated assurances of Sir John Elliot, the real author's confidential friend, that the poems were entirely Macpherson's own composition.

²¹ *Infra*, p. 108, n. 25, p. 173.

²² Appendix to Mr Mackenzie's Report, p. 2. where Sir John's letter is dated, by mistake, 1760, instead of 1766.

It is now almost unnecessary to add, that these are all detached ballads unconnected with each other ; and that no trace of an epic poem has ever been discovered in the Highlands of Scotland, either before or since the publication of Ossian. Above twenty years before Macpherson published, Dr Ferguson, and Mr Pope minister of Reay in Caithness, could find nothing but the ballads of Magnus, Erragon, Lammon-more, and the Death of Oscar ; and Jerom Stone²³, a school-master at Dunkeld, who died in 1756, collected these and seven other Irish ballads, but no part of Macpherson's Ossian was then discovered. For the space of forty-three years since the first appearance of Ossian, the Highlands have been ransacked by every traveller, and every chieftain of informa-

²³ Report, 23-5-7. Appendix, 53. 63. Jerom Stone's collection was purchased from his brother by Mr Chalmers, and presented to the Highland Society. It contains ten such ballads as Magnus, Erragon, the Death of Conloch, of Oscar, and of Fraoch, with six modern poems ; of all of which, an index is now before me.

tion or research ; by Sir James Foulis and Sir Adolphus Oughton, both collectors, who had acquired the language in order to peruse the originals ; by Mr Hill, Dr Young, Mr Dempster, and the editors of the Perth Collection of Gaelic poems ; by the Highland Societies, both of London and of Edinburgh ; and the result of every enquiry is this, that much has been fabricated by Macpherson, Clark, Kennedy, and Smith, but that nothing has been discovered, except the Irish ballads. During a period of sixty-seven years, before, and since the appearance of Ossian, no part of the pretended originals has been found in the Highlands, either floating on tradition, or preserved in manuscripts.

Such, then, is the amount of the original evidence, with which, as one thing is meant and another attested, the public ear has been grossly abused. The attestations since collected by the Highland Society, are of a different nature. Johnson was informed, about thirty years ago, that Macpherson, having made some Earse translations from his

English Ossian, had taught a boy to write them; with injunctions to declare, that he had learned them from his grandmother; but the boy, when he grew up, told the story²³; and somewhat of the same evidence is now obtruded upon the public. Sixteen lines of Fingal in Earse, are produced by Mr Gallie, an old clergyman of eighty, to whom they were furnished by a friend well acquainted with Gaelic, from the manuscript which Macpherson had formerly translated at the old gentleman's fire-side²⁴. On applying to the latter for the name of his friend, "so well known for his uncommon acquaintance with Gaelic," I was informed, that it was Mr Lauchlan Macpherson of Strathmashie. This gentleman, in his letter to Blair, had attested, without hesitation, in 1763, that he had accompanied Macpherson in his journey

²³ Johnson's letter to Boswell, February 5. 1775. Life of Johnson, II 318.

²⁴ Mr Mackenzie's Report, pp. 32. 43.

through the Highlands, and assisted in collecting the poems of Ossian ; that he took down from oral tradition, and transcribed from old manuscripts, by far the greatest part of those pieces that were published ; that he had since compared the translation with the copies of the originals still in his hands, and found it so amazingly literal, as to preserve even the cadence of the Gaelic versification ; that some of the hereditary bards had committed very early to writing some of the works of Ossian ; and that one manuscript in particular, which he saw in Mr Macpherson's possession, was written so far back as 1410 ²⁵. Instead of appearing in person to produce those copies of the originals which remained in his hands, and to attest to the world from what particular manuscripts, extant or lost, or from whose oral recitation he had transcribed them, this gentlemen, the kinsman, friend, and amanuensis of Macpherson, and a brother

²⁵ Appendix to Mr Mackenzie's Report, p. 8.

poet, had furnished Mr Gallie with sixteen lines of the Earse version of Fingal, made at his fire-side ; without suspecting that the latter would ever divulge the secret, from whom the lines has been originally procured.

Captain Morison, another amanuensis, x
had given away, prior to the year 1780, one copy at least of the Address to the Sun in Carthon, which he had gotten, as he says, among Macpherson's original papers, when employed (in London) in transcribing the Earse version of Ossian for the press ²⁶. Another copy has been lately produced by Mr Macdiarmid, minister of Weem ²⁷ ; whose son, as I understand, has assured us, in one of our literary journals, that it was taken down by his father, in 1765, from the mouth of an old man in Glenlyon ; and that Captain Morris's or Morison's version was taken down by Morison himself, in 1763,

²⁶ Id. 175-6.

²⁷ Mr Mackenzie's Report, 172. Appendix, 165.

from the mouth of another old man in the Isle of Sky. As this last, so expressly contradicted by Morison's own evidence, is plainly a gratuitous assertion, framed for the support of a very conclusive argument ²⁸,

²⁸ “ We are happy on this occasion to be able to produce the *original* of the Address, (to the Sun in Carthou) taken down from the mouths of persons who had it from their ancestors, and who had committed it to memory before Macpherson was in existence. A copy of the address in Gaelic was taken down from the mouth of an old man in Glenlyon, by the Rev. James Macdiarimid of Weem, in 1765. Another copy of it was taken down by a Captain Morris, from the mouth of an old man in the Isle of Sky, in the year 1763, and was by Captain Morris given to the Rev. Alexander Irvine of Rannoch. Both of the old men had committed this poem to memory in their younger years. These two copies, taken down by persons unknown to each other, from the mouths of persons equally unacquainted, and living at a great distance of place, we have compared, and found to correspond almost exactly ; we give the one taken down by Captain Morris, without the least variation, to the public.—As this address is attested by respectable witnesses, still alive, to have been in the mouths of the common people

the first is entitled to no credit whatsoever. When a copy taken from Macpherson's papers, had been circulated by his amanuensis above twenty-five years ago, the presumption undoubtedly is, that Macdiarmid's copy was obtained, directly or indirectly, from the same source. Accordingly we find, that it differs materially, in six

long before the birth of Macpherson; Mr L. has on this occasion to find out some other imitator." *Literary Journal*, of which I understand that Macdiarmid, the son, is an editor. August 1804, pp. 126-7.

In contradiction to this, Captain A. Morison, in his answers to queries from the Committee of the Highland Society, declares,

"That he got the address to the sun among Mr James Macpherson's original papers, when he was transcribing fairly for him from these original papers, (either collected by himself, or transmitted by his Highland friends) as it stood in the poem of Carthon, afterwards translated and published." Appendix to Mr Mackenzie's Report, p. 176.

Mr Irvine, who took down Morison's evidence, has assured me, that he gave no information whatsoever to Mr Macdiarmid, concerning the fictitious old man in the Isle of Sky.

distinct lines, from the copy communicated by Morison, previous to the year 1780, to Mackinnon of Glendaruel; but that in these lines, and almost in every other word, it coincides most minutely with another copy which Morison had given to the Rev. Mr Irvine of Ranoch, and which was communicated by the latter to Mr Macdiarmid, whose own copy has been evidently transcribed from the same original. Mr Irvine, at the same time, procured from Morison a copy of the Address to the Sun in Carric-thura, which last, Mr Macdiarmid has also produced; and as these are the only specimens of Macpherson's Ossian, procured from the one, and possessed by the other, the conclusion is unavoidable, that the old man in Glenlyon was no other than Morison himself²⁹.^x Morison, having com-

²⁹ Compare Macdiarmid's copy (appendix to Mackenzie's Report, 185.) with Mr Irvin's copy in the Literary Journal for August 1804, p. 126. Morison adds in his evidence, that he had given Mr Irvine a true and faithful copy of the Address to the Sun, in the

mitted these passages to memory, delivered the two copies of the Address to the Sun in Carthon with some variations; such perhaps as existed in Macpherson's Earse version of Ossian, which, when shewn at Edinburgh, was filled with the interlineations, alterations, and additions of an author correcting his own productions. But it will not now be pretended, that Morison gave one copy to Mackinnon, with the variation of six distinct lines, and afterwards ano-

original, and some other fragments of Ossian's poems; which Mr Irvine informs me were Dargo, (according to Morison's evidence, not published by Macpherson, from whom he received it,) and the Address to the Sun in Carric-thura. But Macdiarmid was furnished, by the old man in Glenlyon, with several other fragments, which are irrecoverably lost; those two addresses to the sun excepted, which Morison got among Macpherson's papers. He has also been made to produce the Bed of Gaul, almost verbatim as printed in Smith's Seandana; a well known fabrication, which assuredly the author himself would not now, as a Christian and as a clergyman, venture to attest upon oath as authentick. But a single word in the Address to the Sun in Carthon; "When the world is dark with *tempests*—

ther copy to Irvine, coinciding most exactly, and by mere accident, in those identical lines, with the old man of Glenlyon's edition.

In a liberal, and to men of letters an interesting, controversy, which I have happily divested of its former acrimony, it is painful to animadvert upon those disingenuous

thou laughest at the *storm*." "Nuair adhubhas min danhan *stoirm*," is sufficient to convince us, that it is a modern fabrication. The specimen of Carric-thura, is full of such words. "*Morning* rose in the east." "Dh eirich *maduinn* (*matutinus*) a soils on ear." "The warning flame edged with *smoke*," Teine dall 's a thaobh san *smuid*;" "The silence of the king is terrible. "*Charobh sàmhchair an rìgh fuoin*," from *vanus*, not *vain*. "The tempests (*storms*) are before my face." Tha na *stoirm* a' taomadh shuas." "The course of the *storm* is mine." "S leam astar is spairn nan *stoirm*:" "Fingal returned in the gleam of his *arms*;" "Thill ceannard nam fear 'na *airm*." "Why dost thou come to my presence with thy shadowy *arms*." Do shámhla cho baoth ri d' *airm*. "Their souls settled like a sea after a *storm*." Shioloidh 'n *anam* (*anima*) mar mhuir o' *stoirm*:" And this was the genuine language of the Caledonians in the third century! Appendix to Mackenzie's Report, 162, &c.

arts, to which anonymous writers are so apt to resort. But when the parole evidence amounts to nothing, the question recurs with additional force ; Where are those manuscripts which Macpherson certainly collected in the Highlands, and with which his Earse and English versions of Ossian might still be compared ? They have certainly neither been lost by accident, nor destroyed by design ; and if Macpherson of Strathmashie, whose nephew is still alive, had preserved any copies, as he has solemnly asserted, let them be produced and compared with the manuscripts from which they were transcribed ; if the Address to the Sun was taken by Morison, not from Macpherson's Earse version of Carthon, but from original papers, let those originals at least be produced. The *Gaelic* manuscripts collected by Macpherson, are apparently those which were lodged in 1782 with Mr John Mackenzie, “ for the purpose of removing,” not the objections to the authenticity of Ossian, but, “ the doubts raised by John-son, whether any ancient manuscripts in

“ that language really existed” ³⁰. They have been repeatedly examined by Shaw, Astle, Dr Donald Smith, by myself, and others, but no part of Macpherson’s Ossian has hitherto been discovered. I have repeatedly offered to renounce my objections, to abandon the whole controversy, and, what no disputant ever offered before, to become a sincere convert to the opposite faith, if a single poem of Macpherson’s Ossian, for instance Carthon, or even the Address to the Sun in Carthon, or a single address to Malvina, could be pointed out in an Earse manuscript, above a century old ; but it is sufficient to observe in conclusion, that after an interval of five years, no such manuscript has yet been produced ³¹.

EDINBURGH, *June 7. 1805.*

³⁰ See Dissertation on the supposed authenticity of Ossian’s poems. *Hist. Scot.* IV. 426, note, 2d edition. One of them was probably the MS. which Macpherson left as the original of Ossian at Becket’s shop, but which was afterwards said by some to have been an old Irish genealogical MS. Letter from the Bishop of Dromore to Dr Anderson.

³¹ Instead of complying with this plain and pointed

requisition, the Committee of the Highland Society employed the late Dr D. Smith, to collect such passages from their MSS. as might bear, or acquire, a remote affinity to Macpherson's Fingal. For this purpose, thirteen or fourteen *modern* manuscripts were taken, containing many hundred pages, and consisting of different collections of Earse and Irish poems. From this extensive range, between twelve and fifteen hundred detached lines are selected, and pieced together, with the most preposterous diligence, in order to present to the reader, by dint of translation, something like the plan and outlines of Fingal. No intimation is given of the particular songs or poems from which they are taken; but the references to the different pages of the MSS. are as desultory as the lines themselves are unconnected and detached. For instance the three first lines, concerning Daol watching the ocean, (as if the same with Moran, the scout of ocean,) are taken from Kennedy's Collection, p. 78, st. 8; the eight next lines, (a part of the Irish ballad of Garibhe Mac Stairn,) from Fletcher's, p. 183, stanzas 1st and 13th; the three succeeding lines from Fletcher's, stanza 2d; and the six last lines of the first page, are taken from the four different pages and stanzas of the following manuscripts; Mr Maclaggin, p. 91, l. s. 3. Kennedy, p. 154, st. id. p. 130, st. 5. id. p. 154. st. 3. Six successive lines in the same paragraph, are often taken from four or five different pages of different manuscripts; and in a single page, (248) twenty two lines

are taken from fifteen different pages of ten separate and distinct manuscripts. This, if practised in any other language than Earse, would be termed fabrication. What opinion, for instance, would the public entertain of an author who should piece together two partial quotations, in order to extract from them in conjunction a sense of which they were not separately susceptible? Yet this is practised for seventy pages, and supported by such false translation as Rìgh an *Teamhra* (Temora) king of *Taura*, in order to approximate the word to *Tura* in the opening of Fingal; and Loingear na *mach*, (*mach*, a wave, *maght*, a plain,) the ships of the *hills*, in order to assimilate the expression to “the desert of the *hills*,” Fingal’s poetical appellation in the preface to the Fragments; after which no reliance can be placed on the translator’s fidelity. But the collection with which the Committee has chiefly collated Fingal, is itself a more recent fabrication by Kennedy, a school-master, who complains bitterly that Dr John Smith, to whom it was communicated, has intercepted and appropriated the fruits of his invention. As a proof of this, in Kennedy’s edition of the ballad of Conloch, the spirit of Loda is introduced from Fingal. But as Kennedy was ignorant that the name in Macpherson’s Earse version of Ossian, is Cruth Loduin, the shape or form of Wodin, the *spirit* of *Loda* is literally translated into Earse, *Spiorad Lodda*. *Ruidh fuaimneach arm mar Spiorad Lodda*. He *rushed in* the sound of

his *arms* like the *spirit* of *Loda*. No such passage occurs in Miss Brook's genuine edition of the ballad, of which Kennedy retains only the story and 29 verses; but Smith, to whom he acknowledged his fabrications, (Report, 107. Appendix, 69.) has inserted the whole passage verbatim in his poem of *Manos*, into which he has converted the ballad of *Conloch*. Thus the Committee of the Highland Society has been very laudably employed in collating one forgery with another; and, in order to prove the authenticity of *Ossian*, has unwarily given a sanction to a very gross fabrication. But the authenticity of Macpherson's *Ossian* must be a hopeless argument, when, instead of answering a plain requisition for the production of MSS., the Committee has at last reluctantly acknowledged, that there "is not *any one poem* to be found in the Highlands, the same in title and tenor with the poems published by Macpherson;" who, instead of discovering an Earse epopee of the third century, enjoys the exclusive merit of "putting together an original whole;" (Report, p. 152), after which there is surely no room for any farther dispute.

IN a collection of Macpherson's poetical works, some account of his life may perhaps be expected. I have no inclination to become his biographer, but the following literary anecdotes, from Ruddiman's Weekly Magazine (1776) contain the outlines of his early life, and are evidently either the production of Macpherson himself, or of some confidential friend, to whom he had imparted the secret, that the poems of Ossian were entirely of his own composition. The anecdotes are written in the Celtic idiom, and were probably first inserted in an evening newspaper, which Macpherson and Macfarlan conducted in conjunction.

LITERARY ANECDOTES
OF
JAMES MACPHERSON, Esq.

MR MACPHERSON was born at Ruthven, in the county of Inverness, in the latter end of the year 1738. He is descended from one of the most ancient families in the north of Scotland, being cousin-german to the chief of the clan of the Macphersons, who deduce their origin from the ancient Catti of Germany.

“ Having received the rudiments of education at home, he was sent to the grammar-school of Inverness; where his genius became so conspicuous, that his relations, contrary to their original intention, determined to breed him to a learned profession. With this view he was sent successively to the universities of Aberdeen and Edinburgh, in the last of which he finished his studies.

“ During the time Mr Macpherson remained at the university, it is presumed, he sacrificed in secret to the muses *. But the first pieces of his composition that

* In April 1753, the publisher printed for him a poem called *The Highlander*, in three Cantos, which we believe was his first essay, and had a very rapid sale.---*Note by Ruddiman*. The expression in the text, “ It is presumed, he had sacrificed in secret to the muses,”

were presented from the press, made not their appearance till early in the year 1760. These were ‘*Fragments of Antient Poetry*,’ whose simplicity of language, harmony of diction, natural sentiments, beauty and sublimity of thought, recommended them to general estimation.

“The favourable reception given to these specimens of Celtic poetry, encouraged Mr Macpherson to give a larger work, ‘*The poem of Fingal and other pieces*,’ to the public, in the end of the year 1761; and the next year he finished his collection, by the publication of ‘*Temora*, and the remaining poems of Ossian.’

“The very favourable reception given by the world to these works, is recent in the memory of every reader. The most rigid critics allowed them to possess every mark of an exalted genius in the author or translator; whilst many did not hesitate to prefer them to all other poetical compositions, whether antient or modern. We shall not pretend to decide upon a subject so generally understood. It is sufficient to observe, that the poems were translated, in the course of the first year after their publication, into almost all the languages of Europe.

“Mr Macpherson having obtained an office from the crown in one of the new provinces ceded at the last

coincides so remarkably with another in the preface to the fourth edition (1773), “I had served an apprenticeship, though in secret, to the muses,” as to justify our opinion, that the anecdotes were written either by Macpherson himself, or by a friend to whom he had imparted the secret, and who has adopted his very words.

peace, repaired to America early in the year 1764. Having, as President of the Council of West Florida, assisted in settling the civil government of that colony, he visited several of the West India islands, and some of the provinces of North America, and returned to England in the year 1766.

“ His attention being diverted from literary pursuits, by avocations of a political kind, we do not find any publication under his name till the year 1771. This was ‘ An Introduction to the History of Great Britain and Ireland,’ a work of great erudition, ingenuity, and inquiry.

“ In the beginning of the year 1773, he published his translation of the Iliad of Homer, which he is said to have undertaken, executed, and published in the space of three months.

“ The translation of the Iliad was scarcely sent forth from the press, when he undertook a much greater, and a more laborious and important work, ‘ The History of Great Britain from the Restoration to the Accession of the House of Hanover.’

“ To execute this work, he was furnished with the best and most authentic materials, the original papers of the families of Stuart and Hanover, together with those of king William; of which he made the most liberal and accurate use, without being either tinctured with the prejudices, or biassed by the parties and factions, which convulsed these kingdoms during the times of which he treats. The truth of this obser-

vation may be safely referred to the general applause which the author has received from the adherents of the parties, and the descendants of the persons, who make the greatest figure in vice, as well as in virtue, during the period whose history he has chosen to record.

“ As a man of letters, possessed of elegant, strong, and extensive talents, Mr Macpherson is known sufficiently to the world without the aid of a biographer. In private life, he is highly respected, as a man of abilities, integrity, and honour.

“ Though it is inconsistent with the good sense which he certainly possesses, to remain insensible of his own merit as a writer, we are told, that he is *too proud*, not to be *excessively modest* on that subject; he never obtrudes his own literary occupations or knowledge upon the conversation of others; in short, he seems anxious to conceal his possessing those talents which have gained him so much reputation in the world.

“ Mr Macpherson has been too independant, and perhaps *too high* in his mind to court the great; he has therefore received no favour from their munificence, no advantage from their patronage. We cannot, in all our inquiries, discover that he ever had what the world distinguish by the name of a patron.

“ Whatever success may have attended his life, has been *commanded*, as it were, by the superiority of his own talents. Without the mortification of attending the levees, or bending to the vanity of the pretended

encouragers of literary merit, he has acquired, or at least possesses, independence of fortune, which has sufficiently raised him above the meanness of prostituting his judgment to gain their support, or his abilities to purchase their favour.

“ In the two principal provinces of history and poetry, Mr Macpherson has already made a great figure. A constitution of body as vigorous as the powers of his mind, seems to promise the world many other works of genius from his pen.

“ Since his return from America, he has spent his whole time, if we except a few excursions to the continent, in London, or in its environs, where he has a small but elegant villa, to which he frequently retires. In that quiet and agreeable retreat, he is said to amuse himself with less laborious studies than those, whose fruits the public have already received from his hands. With these, it is to be hoped, he will some time or other gratify the world, unless he should happen to be called forth in the political line, to which his talents are adapted, as much as to letters.

London, December 1775.

To these anecdotes I can add but little. During the American war, he was employed as a superintendant of the ministerial newspapers, and wrote a variety of poli-

tical pamphlets which are now forgotten. On the resignation of Sir John Macpherson, he was appointed agent for the Nabob of Arcot, in which situation he amassed a large fortune, and by whose interest, in 1780, he was returned to parliament for the borough of Camelford. He retired at last to his native country, where he had purchased an estate, and built a large mansion, which he named Belville, as equivalent to his own explanation of Selma *. He died on the 17th of February 1796, and his body was conveyed from Badenoch, by his own appointment, to Westminster Abbey, and interred among the poets, in order to assert, by this last act, his genuine and exclusive claim as an author to the poems of Ossian. For the same purpose, by his special direction, a monument was erected to his memory in Badenoch; and a thousand pounds, which he had formerly received as a subscription from his friends in the East Indies, were appropriated to the publication of his Earse version; as if to establish his reputation as a poet, in his native tongue. His private character may well be spared; and it is sufficient to observe, that his morals were not such as to refute the charge which I have made, that, with a genius truly poetical, he was one of the first literary impostors in modern times.

* Beautiful appearance.

POEMS OF OSSIAN, &c.

ADVERTISEMENT

PREFIXED TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE translator thinks it necessary to make the public acquainted with the motives which induced him to depart from his proposals concerning the originals. Some men of genius, whom he has the honour to number among his friends, advised him to publish proposals for printing by subscription the whole originals, as a better way of satisfying the public concerning the authenticity of the poems, than depositing manuscript copies in any public library. This he did; but no subscribers appearing, he takes it for the judgment of the public, that neither the one or the other is necessary. However, there is a design on foot to print the originals, as soon as the translator shall have time to transcribe them for the press; and if this publication shall not take place, copies will then be deposited in one of the public libraries, to prevent so ancient a monument of genius from being lost.

The translator thanks the public for the more than ordinary encouragement given him, for executing this

work. The number of his subscribers does him honour. He could have presented to the public the first names in the nation; but, though more have come to his hands, than have appeared before the works of authors of established reputation, yet many more have subscribed; and he chuses to print none at all rather than an imperfect list. Deeply sensible of the generosity of a certain noble person, the translator yet avoids to name him, as his exalted station, as well as merit, has raised him above the panegyric of one so little known.

PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE love of novelty, which, in some degree, is common to all mankind, is more particularly the characteristic of that mediocrity of parts, which distinguishes more than one half of the human species. This inconstant disposition is never more conspicuous, than in what regards the article of amusement. We change our sentiments concerning it every moment, and the distance between our admiration and extreme contempt is so very small, that the one is almost a sure presage of the other. The poets, whose business it is to please, if they want to preserve the fame they have once acquired, must very often forfeit their own judgments to this variable temper of the bulk of their readers, and accommodate their writings to this unsettled taste. A fame so fluctuating deserves not to be much valued.

Poetry, like virtue, receives its reward after death. The fame which men pursued in vain, when living, is often bestowed upon them when they are not sensible

of it. This neglect of living authors is not altogether to be attributed to that reluctance which men shew in praising and rewarding genius. It often happens, that the man who writes, differs greatly from the same man in common life. His foibles, however, are obliterated by death, and his better part, his writings, remain : his character is formed from them, and he, that was no extraordinary man in his own time, becomes the wonder of succeeding ages. From this source proceeds our veneration for the dead. Their virtues remain, but the vices, which were once blended with their virtues, have died with themselves.

This consideration might induce a man, diffident of his abilities, to ascribe his own compositions to a person, whose remote antiquity and whose situation, when alive, might well answer for faults which would be inexcusable in a writer of this age. An ingenious gentleman made this observation, before he knew any thing but the name of the epic poem, which is printed in the following collection. When he had read it, his sentiments were changed. He found it abounded too much with those ideas, that only belong to the most early state of society, to be the work of a modern poet. Of this, I am persuaded, the public will be as thoroughly convinced, as this gentleman was, when they shall see the poems ; and that some will think, notwithstanding the disadvantages with which the works ascribed to Ossian appear, it would be a very uncommon instance

of self-denial in me to disown them, were they really of my composition.

I would not have dwelt so long upon this subject, especially as I have answered all reasonable objections to the genuineness of the poems in the Dissertation, were it not on account of the prejudices of the present age, against the ancient inhabitants of Britain, who are thought to have been incapable of the generous sentiments to be met with in the poems of Ossian. If we err in praising too much the times of our forefathers, it is also as repugnant to good sense, to be altogether blind to the imperfections of our own. If our fathers had not so much wealth, they had certainly fewer vices than the present age. Their tables, it is true, were not so well provided, neither were their beds so soft as those of modern times; and this, in the eyes of men, who place their ultimate happiness in those conveniencies of life, gives us a great advantage over them. I shall not enter farther into this subject, but only observe, that the general poverty of a nation has not the same influence, that the indigence of individuals, in an opulent country, has upon the manners of the community. The idea of meanness, which is now connected with a narrow fortune, had its rise after commerce had thrown too much property into the hands of a few; for the poorer sort, imitating the vices of the rich, were obliged to have recourse to roguery and circumvention, in order to supply their extravagance, so that they were,

not without reason, reckoned in more than one sense, the worst of the people.

It is now two years since the first translations from the Gaelic language were handed about among people of taste in Scotland. They became at last so much corrupted, through the carelessness of transcribers, that, for my own sake, I was obliged to print the genuine copies. Some other pieces were added, to swell the publication into a pamphlet, which was entitled, *Fragments of Ancient Poetry*. The *Fragments*, upon their first appearance, were so much approved of, that several people of rank, as well as taste, prevailed with me to make a journey into the Highlands and Western Isles, in order to recover what remained of the works of the old bards, especially those of Ossian, the son of Fingal, who was the best, as well as most ancient, of those who are celebrated in tradition for their poetical genius. I undertook this journey, more from a desire of complying with the request of my friends, than from any hopes I had of answering their expectations. I was not unsuccessful, considering how much the compositions of ancient times have been neglected, for some time past, in the north of Scotland. Several gentlemen in the Highlands and Isles, generously gave me all the assistance in their power; and it was by their means I was enabled to compleat the epic poem. How far it comes up to the rules of the *epopæa*, is the province of criticism to examine. It is only my business to lay it before the reader, as I have found it. As it

is one of the chief beauties of composition, to be well understood, I shall here give the story of the poem, to prevent that obscurity which the introduction of characters utterly unknown might occasion.

(The story of the poem is omitted, as it forms the arguments to the different books of Fingal.)

The story of this poem is so little interlarded with fable, that one cannot help thinking it the genuine history of Fingal's expedition, embellished by poetry. In that case, the compositions of Ossian are not less valuable for the light they throw on the ancient state of Scotland and Ireland, than they are for their poetical merit. Succeeding generations founded on them all their traditions concerning that period; and they magnified or varied them, in proportion as they were swayed by credulity or design. The bards of Ireland, by ascribing to Ossian compositions which are evidently their own, have occasioned a general belief, in that country, that Fingal was of Irish extraction, and not of the ancient Caledonians, as is said in the genuine poems of Ossian. The inconsistencies between those spurious pieces, prove the ignorance of their authors. In one of them Ossian is made to mention himself as baptised by St Patrick; in another, he speaks of the famous crusade, which was not begun in Europe for many centuries after.

Though this anachronism quite destroys the authority of the bards, with respect to Fingal; yet their desire to make him their countryman, shows how famous he was in Ireland as well as in the north of Scotland.

Had the Senachies of Ireland been as well acquainted with the antiquities of their nation as they pretended, they might derive as much honour from Fingal's being a Caledonian, as if he had been an Irishman; for both nations were almost the same people in the days of that hero. The Celtæ, who inhabited Britain and Ireland before the invasion of the Romans, though they were divided into numerous tribes, yet, as the same language and customs, and the memory of their common origin remained among them, they considered themselves as one nation. After South Britain became a province of Rome, and its inhabitants begun to adopt the language and customs of their conquerors, the Celtæ, beyond the pale of the empire, considered them as a distinct people, and consequently treated them as enemies. On the other hand, the strictest amity subsisted between the Irish and Scots Celtæ for many ages, and the customs and ancient language of both still remaining, leave no room to doubt, that they were of old one and the same nation.

It was at first intended to prefix to Ossian's poems a discourse concerning the ancient inhabitants of Britain; but as a gentleman, in the north of Scotland, who has thoroughly examined the antiquities of this island, and is perfectly acquainted with all the branches of the Celtic tongue, is just now preparing for the press a work on that subject, the curious are referred to it.

PREFACE

TO

THE FOURTH EDITION,

PUBLISHED IN 1773.

WITHOUT encreasing his genius, the author may have improved his language, in the eleven years, that the following poems have been in the hands of the public. Errors in diction might have been committed at twenty-four, which the experience of a riper age may remove: and some exuberances in imagery may be restrained, with advantage, by a degree of judgment acquired in the progress of time. Impressed with this opinion, he ran over the whole with attention and accuracy; and, he hopes, he has brought the work to a state of correctness, which will preclude all future improvements.

"The eagerness, with which these poems have been received abroad, are a recompense for the coldness with which a few have affected to treat them at home. All the polite nations of Europe have transferred them into their respective languages ; and they speak of him, who brought them to light, in terms that might flatter the vanity of one fond of fame. In a convenient indifference for a literary reputation, the author hears praise without being elevated, and ribaldry, without being depressed. He has frequently seen the first bestowed too precipitately ; and the latter is so faithless to its purpose, that it is often the only index to merit in the present age.

Though the taste, which defines genius, by the points of the compass, is a subject fit for mirth in itself, it is often a serious matter in the sale of a work. When rivers define the limits of abilities, as well as the boundaries of countries, a writer may measure his success by the latitude under which he was born. It was to avoid a part of this inconvenience, that the author is said, by some, who speak without any authority, to have ascribed his own productions to another name. If this was the case, he was but young in the art of deception. When he placed the poet in antiquity, the translator should have been born on this side of the Tweed.

These observations regard only the frivolous in matters of literature ; these, however, form a majority in

every age and nation. In this country, men of genuine taste abound ; but their still voice is drowned in the clamours of a multitude, who judge by fashion of poetry, as of dress. The truth is, to judge aright, requires almost as much genius as to write well ; and good critics are as rare as great poets. Though two hundred thousand Romans stood up, when Virgil came into the theatre, Varius only could correct the *Æneid*. He that obtains fame must receive it through mere fashion ; and gratify his vanity with the applause of men, of whose judgment he cannot approve.

The following poems, it must be confessed, are more calculated to please persons of exquisite feelings of heart, than those who receive all their impressions by the ear. The novelty of cadence, in what is called a prose version, though not destitute of harmony, will not to common readers supply the absence of the frequent returns of rhyme. This was the opinion of the writer himself, though he yielded to the judgment of others, in a mode, which presented freedom and dignity of expression, instead of fetters, which cramp the thought, whilst the harmony of language is preserved. His intention was to publish in verse. The making of poetry, like any other handicraft, may be learned by industry ; and he had served his apprenticeship, though in secret, to the muses.

It is, however, doubtful, whether the harmony which these poems might derive from rhyme, even in much

better hands than those of the translator, could atone for the simplicity and energy, which they would lose. The determination of this point shall be left to the readers of this preface. The following is the beginning of a poem, translated from the Norse to the Gaelic language; and, from the latter, transferred into English. The verse took little more time to the writer than the prose; and even he himself is doubtful, (if he has succeeded in either) which of them is the most literal version.

(This specimen of Macpherson's versification, entitled a Fragment of a Northern Tale, is inserted at the end of the poetry, Vol. II. p. 632.)

One of the chief improvements, on this edition, is the care taken, in arranging the poems in the order of time; so as to form a kind of regular history of the age to which they relate. The writer has now resigned them for ever to their fate. That they have been well received by the public, appears from an extensive sale; that they shall continue to be well received, he may venture to prophecy without the gift of that inspiration, to which poets lay claim. Through the medium of version upon version, they retain, in foreign languages, their native character of simplicity and energy. Genuine poetry, like gold, loses little, when properly transfused; but when a composition cannot bear the test of a literal version, it is a counterfeit which ought

not to pass current. The operation must, however, be performed with skilful hands. A translator, who cannot equal his original, is incapable of expressing its beauties.

LONDON, *August* 15. 1773.

CONTENTS

OF THE

FIRST VOLUME.

	Page.
FINGAL, Book I.	1
Book II.	53
Book III.	85
Book IV.	117
Book V.	149
Book VI.	179
Comala	211
The War of Caros	229
The War of Inis-Thona	251
The Battle of Lora	269
Conlath and Cuthona	293
Carthon	307
The Death of Cuthullin	349
Dar-thula	373
Carric-thura	409
The Songs of Selma	447
Calthon and Conmal	469
Lathmon	487
Oithona	515
Croma	533
Berrathon	551

ERRATA TO VOL. I.

Page 24. line 12. note. *For my spear read thy spear.*

31.	15.	<i>For loud resounding read loud and resounding.</i>
32.	23.	<i>For to severals read by severals.</i>
74.	9.	<i>For from his sides read on his sides.</i>
284.	11.	<i>For Now-gems in bowls read Nor gems on bowls.</i>
317.	6.	<i>For Scuti read Scuite.</i>
333.	10.	<i>For Conlath read Conloch.</i>
334.	2.	<i>For or Cuthullin read and Cuthullin.</i>
429.	9.	<i>For move read live.</i>
445.	24.	<i>For Sylla read Scylla.</i>
454.	2.	<i>For the way read their way.</i>

FINGAL,
AN EPIC POEM;
IN
SIX BOOKS.

Fortia facta patrum. VIRG.

ARGUMENT TO BOOK I.

Cuthullin, (general of the Irish tribes, in the minority of Cormac, king of Ireland) sitting alone beneath a tree, at the gate of Tura, a castle of Ulster (the other chiefs having gone on a hunting party to Cromla, a neighbouring hill), is informed of the landing of Swaran, king of Lochlin, by Moran, the son of Fithil, one of his scouts. He convenes the chiefs; a council is held, and disputes run high, about giving battle to the enemy. Connal, the petty king of Togorma, and an intimate friend of Cuthullin, was for retreating till Fingal, king of those Caledonians who inhabited the north-west coast of Scotland, whose aid had been previously solicited, should arrive; but Calmar, the son of Matha, lord of Lara, a country in Connaught, was for engaging the enemy immediately. Cuthullin, of himself willing to fight, went into the opinion of Calmar. Marching towards the enemy, he missed three of his bravest heroes, Fergus, Duchomar, and Cathba. Fergus arriving, tells Cuthullin of the death of the other two chiefs; which introduces the affecting episode of Morna, the daughter of Cormac. The army of Cuthullin is descried at a distance by Swaran, who sent the son of Arno to observe the motions of the enemy, while he himself ranged his forces in order of battle. The son of Arno, returning to Swaran, describes to him Cuthullin's chariot, and the terrible appearance of that hero. The armies engage, but night coming on, leaves the victory undecided. Cuthullin, according to the hospitality of the times, sends to Swaran a formal invitation to a feast, by his bard Carril, the son of Kinfena. Swaran refuses to come. Carril relates to Cuthullin the story of Grudar and Brassolis. A party, by Connal's advice, is sent

to observe the enemy ; which closes the action of the first day. MACPHERSON.

The opening of Fingal adheres strictly to the Horatian precept ;

Semper ad eventum festinat ; et in medias res,

Non secus ac notas, auditorem rapit :

which Blair, with an evasive simplicity, terms a most happy coincidence of thought. But the supposed translator maintains, that “ there are certain general rules in the conduct of an epic poem, which, as they are natural, are therefore universal ; and in these the two poets (Homer and Ossian) exactly correspond.”—*Temora*, viii. Note.

As a siege, or voyage, of ten years duration, was incompatible with an epic poem, intended for public recitation, Homer himself was reduced to the necessity of selecting the most important event for the Iliad, and the most important period of the voyage for the Odyssey ; in which last alone, the narrative of preceding transactions is introduced, as an episode. Succeeding epic poets, from Virgil to Milton, have adopted the same rule from imitation, and begin invariably in the midst of things. That the rule itself is neither universal nor obviously natural, appears from the opposite conduct, not only of the Cyclic poets, and of every rhyming chronicler in the dark ages, but of Apollonius Rhodius, who adheres to the regular course of events, and of Ariosto and Spenser, who, neglecting Homer, pursue some fantastical plan of their own. Trissino and Tasso were the first moderns who revived the classical model of epic poetry, the chief excellence of which is, not that it is natural or obvious, and therefore universal, but that it is the best, and most artificial arrangement which it is possible to conceive. The arrangement most natural and obvious, perhaps, to the genuine Ossian, if not the origin of the war with Swaran, of which we are still ignorant, was Cuthullin's application to Fingal for aid ; the voyage of the latter to

Ireland ; his arrival there on the defeat of his friends ; in short, the transactions which the poet himself had witnessed, not those of which he had heard from others. But the supposed translator, to whom, in arranging his " brief Epic," all parts of the poem were equally present, begins abruptly in the middle, with Cuthullin reclined under Tura's wall ; and invokes no muse, because, says Blair, he acknowledges none. He invokes no muse in the Highlander, which, if the first six lines were retrenched, would begin abruptly like Fingal, without any formal introduction of the subject ; and, " The man I sing," the common exordium of epic poems, would have betrayed as plain imitation as the invocation of a muse.

FIN G A L.

BOOK I.

CUTHULLIN ¹ sat by Tura's wall: by the tree
of the rustling sound ². His spear leaned against

¹ Cuthullin, the son of Semo and grandson to Caithbat, a druid celebrated in tradition for his wisdom and valour. Cuthullin, when very young, married Bragela, the daughter of Sor-glan, and, passing over into Ireland, lived for some time with Connal, grandson, by a daughter, to Congal, the petty king of Ulster. His wisdom and valour in a short time gained him such reputation, that, in the minority of Cormac, the supreme king of Ireland, he was chosen guardian to the young king, and sole manager of the war against Swaran, king of Lochlin. After a series of great actions, he was killed in battle somewhere in Con-naught, in the twenty seventh year of his age. MACPHERSON.

The opening of Fingal was inserted among the Fragments, written at Moffat, when Toland's *History of the Druids* was the chief source of Macpherson's early information concerning

a rock. His shield lay on grass, by his side. Amid his thoughts of mighty Carbar, a hero slain by the chief in war; the scout of ocean comes, Moran, the son of Fithil³!

the Celts. "Several of these druids rendered themselves very remarkable; as the *druid* Trosdan; *Cabadius*, grandfather to the most celebrated champion *Cuculand*; *Tages*, the father of *Morna*, mother to the no less famous *Fin Mac Cuil*;" or, according to the Irish orthography, in Toland's notes, *Cathbait*, *Cuchulaid*, *Tadhg*, *Fin mac Cubhail*, Hist. Druids. 55. In the Fragments, accordingly, Cuthullin was termed *Cuchulaid*; and, in the first edition of Ossian, *Cuchullin*, which was altered afterwards to "*Cuth-Ullin*, the voice of *Ullin*, a poetical name given to the son of Semo, by the bards;" (Ossian, 3d edit.) and, as these names were all mentioned by Toland, in the same sentence, Macpherson was early led into the strange anachronism, of rendering Cuthullin, a real or fabulous hero of the first century, contemporary with Fingal of the third. As Keating was silent, he was also ignorant, on completing the poem, that Cuthullin's wife was Emeria, not Bragela, a fictitious name of his own invention; and that Cuthullin himself was the son of Sualtach, not of Semo, the name employed by O'Flaharty, for the patriarch Shem.—*Ogygia*, 62. 280. WARNER'S *Remarks on Fingal*, Dublin, 1762.—*Journal des Sçavans*, September 1764.

² *The tree of the rustling sound.*] In the first editions, "The tree of the *rustling leaf*;" "The *aspin*, or poplar tree," as explained in the Fragments: From Thomson's *Spring*:

Or *rustling* turn the many-twinkling *leaves*
Of *aspin* tall.

The original of Gray's *many-twinkling* feet.

³ Cairbar, or Cairbre, signifies a *strong man*: Moran signifies *many*; and Fithil, or rather Fili, an *inferior bard*. MACPHERSON.

“Arise,” says the youth, “Cuthullin, arise, I see the ships of the north ! Many, chief of men, are the foe. Many the heroes of the sea-borne Swaran !” “Moran,” replied the blue-eyed chief, “thou ever tremblest, son of Fithil ! Thy fears have increased the foe. It is Fingal, king ⁴ of desarts, with aid to green Erin of streams.” “I beheld their chief,” says Moran, “tall as a glittering rock ⁵. His spear is a blast-

These etymologies are all fictitious. “For the pronouncing of which celestial judgements, the most famous were Forchern, Neid, Conla, Eogan, Modan, *Moran*, king *Cormac*, his chief justice *Fithill*,” &c. “King *Cormac*’s institution of a prince, or precepts to his son and successor, *Carbre* Lifécair (*Cairbre Lijiochair*).”—TOLAND, 49. 51. Hence the mighty *Carbar*, or *Cairbre*, and the “scout of ocean, *Moran*, the son of *Fithill*,” chief justice to *Cormac*, the supreme king of Ireland.

⁴ Fingal, the son of Comhal, and Morna, the daughter of Thaddu. His grandfather was Trathal, and great-grandfather Trenmor, both of whom are often mentioned in the poem. MACPHERSON. Supra, Note ¹.

Trenmor, in Irish history, was Fingal’s grandfather, and Trathal, whom our author interposes between them, is a fictitious personage.

⁵ *Tall as a glittering rock.*] “*Tall as a rock of ice,*” in the first edition ; from Pope’s *Temple of Fame* :

High on a rock of ice the structure lay,

Steep its ascent, and slippery was the way.

And even the alteration, “tall as a *glittering rock*,” is taken from a simile that follows, a few lines afterwards, in the same poem :

ed pine. His shield the rising moon⁶ ! He sat on the shore ! like a cloud of mist on the silent hill ! Many, chief of heroes ! I said, many are our hands of war. Well art thou named, the Mighty Man : but many mighty men are seen from Tura's windy walls.

“ He spoke, like a wave on a rock⁷, Who in this land appears like me ? Heroes stand not in my presence : they fall to earth from my hand. Who can meet Swaran in fight ? Who but Fin-

So Zembla's *rocks*, the *beauteous* work of frost,
Rise white in air, and *glitter* o'er the coast.

⁶ *His spear is a blasted pine. His shield the rising moon.*]

MILTON, *Paradise Lost*, I. 284.

His *spear*, to equal which the tallest *pine*,
Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the mast
Of some great ammiral.

His ponderous *shield*

Hung on his shoulders, like the *moon*, whose orb
Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views
At *evening* ;

when the moon rises ; and, in converting Satan into Swaran, it was only necessary to suppress those images that are derived from the sciences, or from the arts of civilized life.

⁷ *He spoke like a wave on a rock.*] Ὡς ὅτε ΚΥΜΑ—πρὸς ἄλγυι ΣΚΟΠΕΑΣ. HOMER'S *Iliad*. ii. 394.

The monarch *spoke*, and strait a murmur rose,
Loud as the *surges* when a tempest blows,
That, dashed on broken *rocks*, tumultuous roar,
And foam and thunder to the stony shore.

POPE.

gal, king of Selma of storms ? Once we wrestled on Malmor ; our heels overturned the woods. Rocks fell from their place ; rivulets, changing their course, fled murmuring from our side ⁸. Three days we renewed our strife ; heroes stood at a distance and trembled. On the fourth, Fingal says, that the king of the ocean fell ! but Swaran says, he stood ! Let dark Cuthullin yield to him, that is strong as the storms of his land !”

“ No !” replied the blue-eyed chief, “ I never yield to mortal man ! Dark Cuthullin shall be great or dead ! Go, son of Fithil, take my spear. Strike the sounding shield of Semo ⁹. It hangs at Tura’s rustling gate. The sound of peace is not its voice ! My heroes shall hear

⁸ Rocks *fell from their place* ; rivulets, *changing their course*, fled, murmuring, *from our side*.] VIRG. *Æneid.* viii. 239.

Dissultant ripæ, *refluitque exterritus amnis.*

Imitated in MACPHERSON’S Ode on the *Earl Marischal’s Return*.

When from their native *rocks*, the *frighted springs retire*.

⁹ Cabait, or rather Cathbait, grandfather to the hero, was so remarkable for his valour, that his shield was made use of to alarm his posterity to the battles of the family. We find Fingal making the same use of his own shield in the 4th book. A horn was the most common instrument to call the army together, before the invention of bagpipes. 3d edit. MACPHERSON.

and obey¹⁰." He went. He struck the bossy shield. The hills, the rocks reply. The sound spreads along the wood¹¹: deer start by the lake of roes. Curach leaps from the sounding

In the 1st editions, "Strike the sounding shield of *Cabait*," from the alteration of which to the more alliterative "shield of *Semo*," the note is at variance with the text. But the horn, the most common instrument, before the recent invention of bagpipes, is converted into the shield, to conceal the two succeeding imitations of Hardyknute's, and of Alecto's horn.

¹⁰ *The sound of peace is not its voice. My heroes shall hear on the hill.*] First edit. From the ballad of *Hardyknute*:

When low down in a grassy dale,
They heard their father's horn,
That horn, quoth they, *ne'er sounds in peace*,
We've other sport to bide;
And soon they hied them up the hill,
And soon were at his side.

¹¹ *The hills, the rocks reply; The sound spreads along the wood.*] Hardyknute.

That trees in green wood shuke thereat,
Sa loud rang ilka hill.

Æn. viii. 514. Qua protinus omne
Contremuit nemus, et sylvæ intonuerè profundæ,
Audiit et Triviæ longè lacus; audiit amnis
Sulphurea Nar albus aqua, fontesque Velini;
Et trepidæ matres pressère ad pectora natos.

"Deer start by the lake of roes;" and the shield, to which all the effects of Alecto's horn are thus ascribed, is suspended like a bell at the castle gate; but a shield resounding, when struck, like an alarm bell (in the Fragments, "It never rings in peace," from Hardyknute), could have been suggested only by an Indian gong.

rock; and Connal of the bloody spear! Cru-
gal's breast of snow beats high. The son of
Favi leaves the dark-brown hind. It is the shield
of war, said Ronnar! the spear of Cuthullin,
said Lugar! Son of the sea, put on thy arms!
Calmer, lift thy sounding steel! Puno! dreadful
hero, arise! Cairbar, from thy red tree of Crom-
la! Bend thy knee, O Eth; descend from the
streams of Lena. Ca-olt, stretch thy side as thou
movest along the whistling heath of Mora: thy
side that is white as the foam of the troubled sea,
when the dark winds pour it on rocky Cuthon¹².

Now I behold the chiefs, in the pride of their
former deeds! Their souls are kindled at the
battles of old; at the actions of other times.
Their eyes are flames of fire. They roll in search
of the foes of the land. Their mighty hands
are on their swords. Lightning pours from their
sides of steel¹³. They come like streams from

¹² Cu-raoch signifies *the madness of battle*. Cruth-geal, *fair-complexioned*. Cu-thon, *the mournful sound of waves*. MAC-PHERSON.

These and others, Crugal, Lugar, Favi, Puno, 'dreadful hero! are fictitious names of the translator's invention.

¹³ Lightning pours from their sides of steel.] *Iliad*, ii. 457.

ΑΠΟ ΧΑΛΚΟΥ ΘΕΣΠΕΣΙΟΙΟ,

ΑΙΓΛΗ ΠΑΜΦΑΝΟΩΣΑ δὲ αἰθέρος ἔρανον ἔκε.

the mountains; each rushes roaring from his hill. Bright are the chiefs of battle, in the armour of their fathers. Gloomy and dark their heroes follow, like the gathering of the rainy clouds¹⁴ behind the red meteors of heaven. The sounds of crashing arms ascend. The grey dogs howl between. Uncqual bursts the song of battle. Rocking Cromla echoes round. On Lena's dusky heath they stand, like mist that shades the hills of autumn; when broken and dark it settles high, and lifts its head to heaven¹⁵.

“Hail,” said Cuthullin, “sons of the narrow

¹⁴ *Gloomy and dark—like the gathering of the rainy clouds.*
—MACPHERSON'S *Highlander*, 1. 155.

Here ends the moving host its winding road,
And here condenses, *like a sable cloud*,
That long was *gathering* on the mountain brow,
Then broke in thunder on the vales below.

¹⁵ *Like mist that shades the hills--when broken and dark, it settles high.*] POPE'S *Iliad*, v. 645.

The *low-hung vapours*, motionless and still,
Rest on the *summits* of the *shaded hill*,
Till the mass scatters, as the winds arise,
Dispersed and *broken*, through the ruffled skies.

“The whole compass of nature cannot afford a more exact representation of a numerous army, drawn up in a line of battle, and expecting the charge;” a sufficient reason for transferring it to Ossian. Pope's note, *ib.* l. 641.

vales ! hail, hunters of the deer ! Another sport is drawing near : It is like the dark rolling of that wave on the coast ! Or shall we fight, ye sons of war ! or yield green Erin¹⁶ to Lochlin ! O Connal¹⁷, speak, thou first of men ! thou breaker of the shields ! thou hast often fought with Lochlin : wilt thou lift thy father's spear ?”

¹⁶ Ireland, so called from a colony that settled there, called Falans. Innis-fail, the island of the Fa-il or Falans. MACPHERSON.

“ Or yield green *Inisfail*,” in the first edition ; and these capricious alterations, which have rendered the notes so frequently irreconcilable with the text, are a proof, that the supposed translator had no prototype to adhere to.

¹⁷ Connal, the friend of Cuthullin, was the son of Caithabit, prince of the Tongorma, or the *island of blue waves*, probably one of the Hebrides. His mother was Fioncoma, the daughter of Congal. He had a son by Foba of Conachar-nessar, who was afterwards petty king of Ulster. For his services in the war against Swaran, he had lands conferred on him, which, from his name, were called Tir-chonnail, or, Tir-connel, *i. e.* the land of Connal. MACPHERSON.

This minute genealogy has undoubtedly some foundation in Irish history, or romance ; but the translator, as usual, confounds Connal Cearnach, the cousin of Cuthullin, and Knight, or Master of the Order of the Red Branch, with Connal Golban in the fourth century, whose surname is transferred to the heath of Golban at the end of the book, and from whom the county of Tirconnel derives its name. The prince of Tongormo, however, is just such a fiction as Cuthullin, chief of the isle of Sky. O'BRIAN's *Dict.* MAC CURTIN's *Ant. of Irel.* 83. 123. KEATING, 190. 369.

“Cuthullin !” calm the chief replied, “the spear of Connal is keen. It delights to shine in battle ; to mix with the blood of thousands. But though my hand is bent on fight, my heart is for the peace of Erin. Behold, thou first in Cormac’s war, the sable fleet of Swaran. His masts are many on our coast, like reeds in the lake of Lego. His ships are forests cloathed with mist¹⁸, when the trees yield by turns to the squally wind. Many are his chiefs in battle. Connal is for peace ! Fingal would shun his arm, the first of mortal men ! Fingal, who scatters the mighty, as stormy winds the heath ; when streams roar through echoing Cona ; and night settles with all her clouds on the hill !”

“Fly, thou man of peace,” said Calmar¹⁹,
 “fly,” said the son of Matha ; “go, Connal, to thy silent hills, where the spear never brightens

¹⁸ *His masts are many on our coast like reeds.---His ships are forests cloathed in mist.*] An alteration of Milton’s, “Thick as autumnal leaves that strew the brook,” from THOMSON’S *Autumn* :

Like a long win’try forest, groves of masts,
 Shot up their spires.

¹⁹ *Calm-er, a strong man.* MACPHERSON.

From Calmar, a Swedish city. Matha is literally Matthew the apostle.

in war ! Pursue the dark-brown deer of Crom-la : stop with thine arrows the bounding roes of Lena. But, blue-eyed son of Semo, Cuthullin, ruler of the field, scatter thou the sons of Lochlin²⁰ ; roar through the ranks of their pride. Let no vessel of the kingdom of Snow, bound on the dark-rolling waves of Inistore²¹. Rise, ye dark winds of Erin, rise ! roar, whirlwinds of Lara of hinds ! Amid the tempest let me die, torn, in a cloud, by angry ghosts of men²² : amid the tempest let Calmar die, if ever chace

²⁰ The Gallic name of Scandinavia in general. MACPHERSON.

²¹ The Orkney islands. MACPHERSON.

²² *Amidst the tempest let me die, torn in a cloud by angry ghosts of men.*] *Par. Lost*, ii. 185.

While we perhaps

Designing, or exhorting glorious war,
Caught in a fiery *tempest* shall be hurled,
Each *on his rock transfix'd*, the *sport* and *prey*
Of *wracking whirlwinds*.

The introductory incidents are all from Milton. Cuthullin summons his troops, musters them on the heath, and calls a council of war, like Satan ; and the speeches of Connal and Calmar, are obviously in imitation of those of Belial and Moloch, for peace or war. “ We,” says Belial, “ caught in a fiery *tempest*, shall be hurled, each *on his rock transfix'd*, the *sport* and *prey* of *wracking whirlwinds*.” “ Roar, *whirlwinds* of Lara, of hinds,” says Calmar in return ; “ amidst the *tempest* let me die,” transfix’d on a rock, or, “ torn in a cloud by angry

was sport to him, so much as the battle of shields !”

“ Calmar !” Connal slow replied, “ I never fled, young son of Matha ! I was swift with my friends in fight ; but small is the fame of Connal ! The battle was won in my presence ; the valiant overcame ! But, son of Semo, hear my voice, regard the antient throne of Cormac. Give wealth and half the land for peace, till Fingal shall arrive on our coast. Or, if war be thy choice, I lift the sword and spear. My joy shall be in the midst of thousands ; my soul shall lighten through the gloom of the fight !”

“ To me,” Cuthullin replies, “ pleasant is the noise of arms ! pleasant as the thunder of heaven, before the shower of spring ! But gather all the shining tribes ²³, that I may view the sons

ghosts of men ;” the *sport* and *prey* of wracking whirlwinds, “ if ever *chase* was *sport* to me like the battle of shields.” Here, not only the transposition of images (the *sport* and *prey*, if ever *chase* was *sport* to me), but the author’s peculiar mythology is observable, in converting the wracking whirlwinds into angry ghosts of men.

²³ But gather all the shining tribes.] POPE’S *Iliad*, ii. 520.

He said ; the monarch issued his commands,
 Strait the loud heralds call the *gathering* bands.
 The chiefs enclose their king, the hosts divide
 In *tribes* and nations, ranked on either side.

of war ! Let them pass along the heath, bright as the sun-shine before a storm ; when the west wind collects the clouds, and Morven echoes over all her oaks ! But where are my friends in battle ? The supporters of my arm in danger ? Where art thou, white-bosom'd Cathbar ? Where is that cloud in war ²⁴ Duchomar ? Hast thou left me, O Fergus ! in the day of the storm ? Fergus, first in our joy at the feast ! son of Rossa ! arm of death ! comest thou like a roe from Malmor ? like a hart from thy echoing hills ²⁵ ? Hail thou son of Rossa ! what shades the soul of war ?”

“ Four stones,” replied the chief, “ rise on the grave of Cathba. These hands have laid in earth Duchomar, that cloud in war ! Cathba, son of Torman ! thou wert a sun-beam in Erin. And thou, O valiant Duchomar, a mist of the marshy Lano ; when it moves on the plains of autumn, bearing the death of thousands along ²⁶.

²⁴ *Cloud in war.*] Πολυμοινο νεφος. *Iliad*, xvi. 243.

²⁵ *Comest thou like a roe from Malmor, like a hart from thy echoing hills.*] “ Behold he cometh, leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. My beloved is like a roe, or a young hart. Be thou like a roe, or a young hart in the mountains of Bethel.” *Song of Solomon*, ii. 8. 17.

²⁶ *When it moves on the plains of Autumn, bearing the death*

Morna ! fairest of maids ! calm is thy sleep in the cave of the rock ! Thou hast fallen in darkness, like a star, that shoots across the desert²⁷ ; when the traveller is alone, and mourns the transient beam !”

“ Say,” said Semo’s blue-eyed son, “ say, how fell the chiefs of Erin ? Fell they by the sons of Lochlin, striving in the battle of heroes ? Or what confines the strong in arms to the dark and narrow house²⁸ ?”

of thousands along.] A concealed imitation of Homer’s dog-star. Iliad, xxii. 26.

Παμφαίνονθ’, ὥς’ αστερ, ΕΠΕΣΣΥΜΕΝΟΝ ΠΕΔΙΟΙΟ

Ος ᾗδ’ ὁ ΟΠΟΡΗΣ ΕΙΣΙΝ.

—— κελόν δὲ τε ζῆμα ΤΕΤΥΝΤΑΙ

Καὶ τε ΦΕΡΕΙ ΠΟΛΛΟΝ ΗΥΡΕΤΟΝ ΔΕΙΛΑΙΟΙΣΙ ΒΡΟΤΟΪΣΙΝ.

“ Bright he *strode* along the *plain*, like the star, which, in *Autumn* ascends---pouring heat and fell disease on the *nations* of *hapless men*.” MACPHERSON’S *Homer*, ii. 328. And, to conceal the imitation, Achilles, rushing along the *plain*, like the dog-star that rises in *Autumn*, is converted into the mist of marshy Lano, “ when it sails over the *plains* of *Autumn*, bringing death to the people.” First edit.

²⁷ Like a star that shoots athwart the desert.] First Edit. *Par. Lost*. iv. 556.

Swift as a shooting star,

In Autumn thwarts the night ;

Or, as imitated by Thomson,

Or frequent seems to shoot athwart the gloom. Winter.

²⁸ The dark and narrow house.] GRAY’S *Elegy*.

Each in his narrow cell for ever laid.

“Cathba,” replied the hero, “fell by the sword of Duchomar, at the oak of the noisy streams. Duchomar came to Tura’s cave; he spoke to the lovely Morna. Morna, fairest among women²⁹, lovely daughter of strong-armed Cormac! Why in the circle of stones? in the cave of the rock alone? The stream murmurs along. The old tree groans in the wind. The lake is troubled before thee; dark are the clouds of the sky! But thou art snow on the heath; thy hair is the mist of Cronla; when it curls on the hill; when it shines to the beam of

“If I wait, the *grave* is mine *house*; I have made my bed in the *darkness*.” “For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the *house* appointed for all living.” *Job*, xvii. 13. xxx. 23. “All the kings of the nations, even all of them lie in glory, every one of them in his own *house*.”---*Isaiah*, xiv. 18. From the large family cemeteries of the Jews, divided into a number of distinct cells, the house of the dead was a natural metaphor; (LOUTH’S *Praelect.* 64.) but, in what terms is this combination of the *dark* and *narrow house*, from Gray, and the scriptures, expressed in Earse?

²⁹ *Morna*, (*thou*) fairest among women.] *Frag.* “If you know not, O! *thou fairest among women*.” “What is my beloved more than another beloved, O! *thou fairest among women*.” “Whither is thy beloved gone, O! *thou fairest among women*.” *Song of Solomon*, i. 8. v. 9. vi. 1.

the west ³⁰ ! Thy breasts are two smooth rocks seen from Branno of streams. Thy arms like two white pillars, in the halls of the great Fingal.

“ From whence,” the fair-haired maid replied, “ from whence, Duchomar, most gloomy of men ? Dark are thy brows and terrible ! Red are thy rolling eyes ! Does Swaran appear on the sea ? What of the foe, Duchomar ? ” “ From the hill I return, O Morna, from the hill of the dark-brown hinds. Three have I slain with my bended yew. Three with my long bounding dogs of the chace. Lovely daughter of Cormac, I love thee as my soul ! I have slain one stately deer for thee. High was his branchy head ; and fleet his feet of wind.” “ Duchomar ! ” calm

³⁰ *But thou art snow on the heath, thy hair is the mist of Cromla ; when it curls on the hill ; when it shines to the beam of the west.*] In the Fragments, “ like a thin cloud of gold, on the top of Cromleach.” “ Behold *thou art fair*, my love, behold *thou art fair* ! thou hast doves eyes between thy locks ; thy *hair* is as a flock of goats, that appear from Mount Gilead.” “ Thy *two breasts* are like *two young roes* that are twins, which feed among the lilies.”---*Song of Sol.* iv. 1. 5. converted into, “ Thy *breasts* are like *two smooth rocks*, seen from Branno of streams. Thy *arms* like *two white pillars* in the halls of the great Fingal : ” an alteration of, “ his *legs* are as *pillars of marble*, set upon sockets of fine gold.”---*Id.* v. 15.

the maid replied, "I love thee not, thou gloomy man! hard is thy heart of rock; dark is thy terrible brow. But Cathba, young son of Torman, thou art the love of Morna. Thou art a sun-beam, in the day of the gloomy storm. Sawest thou the son of Torman, lovely on the hill of his hinds? Here the daughter of Cormac waits the coming of Cathba!"

"Long shall Morna wait," Duchomar said, "long shall Morna wait for Cathba! Behold this sword unsheathed! Here wanders the blood of Cathba. Long shall Morna wait. He fell by the stream of Branno³¹! On Cromla I will raise his tomb, daughter of blue-shielded Cormac! Turn on Duchomar thine eyes; his arm is strong as a storm³²." "Is the son of Torman fallen?" said the wildly-bursting voice of the

³¹ Long shall Morna wait, *Duchomar said, long shall Morna wait for Cathba! Behold his sword unsheathed! Here wanders the blood of Cathba. Long shall Morna wait. He fell by the stream of Branno.*] From the *Braes of Yarrow*:

Lang maun she weep, lang maun she, maun she weep,

Lang maun she weep with dule and sorrow;

And lang maun I nae mair weil be seen

Puing the birks on the braes of Yarrow.

³² *On Cromla, I will raise his tomb, daughter of blue-shielded Cormac. Turn on Duchomar thine eyes; his arm is strong as a storm.*] Id.

maid. “Is he fallen on his echoing hills, the youth with the breast of snow? The first in the chace of hinds? The foe of the strangers of ocean? Thou art dark to me, Duchomar, cruel is thine arm to Morna! Give me that sword, my foe! I love the wandering blood of Cath-ba ³³!”

He gave the sword to her tears. She pierced his manly breast ³⁴! He fell, like the bank of a mountain stream ³⁵, and stretching forth his hand

Then *build*, then *build*, ye sisters, sisters sad,

Ye sisters sad, *his tomb* with sorrow—

O'er rashly bauld, a *stronger arm*

Thou met'st, and *fell on the Braes of Yarrow*.

He fell by the stream of Branno. “Why runs *thy stream*, O! Yarrow, Yarrow red.” And from this pathetic ballad, by Hamilton of Bangour, not only the subject, but the dialogue form of the Fragment is taken.

³³ *Give me that sword!*—I love the wandering blood of Cath-ba.] And, in the first edition, “Long shall Morna wait, *Duchomar said*, his blood is on my sword.” *Supra*, n. ³¹.

My lover's blood is on my spear,

How canst thou ever bid me love thee?

³⁴ *She pierced his manly breast.*] *Id.*

The fatal spear that *pierced* his breast,

His *comely breast*, on the braes of Yarrow.

³⁵ *Fell like the bank of a mountain stream.*] Dissultant ripæ. *Supra*, n. ¹¹. She demands the sword, as she loved the blood of her lover, and on obtaining it, stabs Duchomar, who, desiring her to draw the cold steel from his breast, stabs her in

he spoke. " Daughter of blue-shielded Cormac ! Thou hast slain me in youth ! The sword is cold in my breast : Morna, I feel it cold. Give me to Moína, the maid ³⁶. Duchomar was

return, we know not how, nor with what. But the translator had prepared an incident, still more ridiculous, which he was ashamed to revive ; " As she fell, she plucked a stone from the side of the cave, and placed it between them, that his blood might not be mingled with hers." Frag.

Sic tibi, quum fluctus subter labera Sicanos,

Doris amara suam non intermisceat undam.

³⁶ *Morna*---give me to *Moína* the maid.] The signification of the names, in this Fragment, are, *Dubhcomar*, a black well-shaped man : *Fearguth*, (Fergus) the man of the word ; *Muirne*, or, *Morna*, a woman beloved of all ; *Cormac-Cairbre*, (her father,) an unequalled and rough warrior ; *Cromleach*, a crooked hill ; *Mogruch*, (Duchomar's father) a surly looking man ; *Torman*, thunder, the true origin of the Jupiter Taramis, of the antients. *Moine*, soft in temper and person.---MACPHERSON. Fragments.

These names, as usual, are all from Toland. "*Cabadus*," (*Cathba*, the son of *Torman*), " grandfather to the celebrated champion, Cuculland. Tages, the father of *Morna*, mother to the no less famous Fin Mac Cuil. Eogan, married to *Moinic*, daughter of the druid, Dill : the druid, *Mogruch*, the stoutest man in the wars of king *Cormac* ; no less valiant was *Dubcomar*, the chief druid of king Fiacha, and Lugadius Mac Con, the abdicated king of Ireland, treacherously run through with a lance by the druid Fircchisus." (or, according to the Irish orthography, in Toland's notes, *Cathbaitt Dubhcomar*, *Fearchiois*, or, Fergus. Hist. Druid, 55) " Precepts written by king *Cormac*, to his son and successor, *Cairbre Liffecair*," (id. 51). " These altars the Britons termed *Cromleach*, the Irish *Cromleach*, from

the dream of her night ! She will raise my tomb ; the hunter shall raise my fame. But draw the sword from my breast. Morna, the steel is cold !” She came, in all her tears, she came ; she drew the sword from his breast. He pierced her white side ! He spread her fair locks on the ground ! Her bursting blood sounds from her side : her white arm is stained with red. Rolling in death she lay. The cave re-echoed to her sighs.”

“ Peace,” said Cuthullin, “ to the souls of the heroes ! their deeds were great in fight. Let them ride around me on clouds. Let them shew their features of war. My soul shall then be firm in danger ; mine arm, like the thunder of heaven ! But be thou on a moon-beam, O Morna ! near the window of my rest ³⁷ ; when my

Crom, bent (crooked) ; *lech*, a stone.”---(Id. 96). “ *Torman*, thunder, whence the Romans called the Gallic Jupiter, *Taramis*, the thunderer.” Id. 97. *Supra*, n. 1.

³⁷ *Be thou on a moon-beam, near the window of my rest.*]
Æn. iii. 148.

Effigies sacræ divium Phrygiæque penates,
Quos mecum a Troia mediisque ex ignibus urbis
Extulerim ; visi ante oculos adstare jacentis
In somnis, multo manifesti lumine, qua se
Plena per insertas fundebat luna fenestras.

thoughts are of peace ; when the din of arms is past. Gather the strength of the tribes ! Move to the wars of Erin ! Attend the car of my battles ! Rejoice in the noise of my course ! Place three spears by my side : follow the bounding of my steeds ! That my soul may be strong in my friends, when battle darkens round the beams of my steel !"

As rushes a stream of foam from the dark shady steep of Cromla³⁸ ; when the thunder is travelling above, and dark brown night sits on half the hill. *Through the breaches of the tempest look forth the dim faces of ghosts*³⁹. So

Those gods, which I from flaming Troy redeemed,
Before me stood, majestically bright,
Full in the beams of Phæbe's entering light.

DRYDEN.

³⁸ *As rushes a stream of foam, from the dark shady steep of Cromla.] Iliad, xi. 492.*

Ὦσ δ' ὅποτε ΠΑΗΘΩΝ ΠΟΤΑΜΟΣ πεδ' ὄνδε κάτωσι

Χεῖμαρ' ἔρ' οὐ κατ' ὈΡΕΣΦΙΝ, ὈΠΑΖΟΜΕΝΟΣ ΔΙΟΣ ὈΜΒΡΩ.

"As pours a swollen stream to the plain, *white foaming* as it roars down the hills, when lower aloft the wild tempests of father Jove." MACPHERSON'S Homer, i. 333. Or, "when the thunder is travelling *above*, and dark-brown night sits on half the hill."

³⁹ *Through the breaches of the tempest look forth the dim faces of ghosts.] Omitted in the first, but restored, or added, from Comala, n. 2. in the improved edition of 1773. Æn. ii. 522.*

fierce, so vast, so terrible, rushed on the sons of Erin. The chief, like a whale of ocean, whom all his billows pursue, poured valour forth, as a stream, rolling his might along the shore ⁴⁰. The sons of Lochlin heard the noise, as the sound of a winter storm. Swaran struck his bossy shield: he called the son of Arno. “What murmur rolls along the hill, like the gathered flies of the eve ⁴¹? The sons of Erin descend, or

Apparent *diræ facies* inimicaque Troiæ

Numina magna deum.

Æn. ii. 522.

With *dreadful faces* thronged, and fiery arms.

Par. Lost. xii. 644.

⁴⁰ *Rolling his might along the shore.*] A covert simile, purposely inverted to conceal, at once, the imitation and the sense. “The chief, like a *whale of ocean*, whom all his billows pursue, *poured valour forth as a stream, rolling his might along the shore.*”

Part, huge of bulk,

Wallowing unwieldy, enormous in their gait,

Tempest the ocean. There leviathan,

Hugest of living creatures————

———— At his gills

Draws in, and, at his trunk *spouts out*, a sea.

Par. Lost. vii. 41.

Or, the chief *pours valour forth*, as a stream, emitted by the whale of the ocean, wallowing unwieldy, or rolling his might along the shore.

⁴¹ *What murmur rolls along the hill, like the gathered flies of evening.*] POPE's Iliad, ii. 552,

rustling winds roar in the distant wood ! Such is the noise of Gormal, before the white tops of my waves arise ⁴². O son of Arno, ascend the hill ; view the dark face of the heath !”

He went. He trembling, swift returned. His eyes rolled wildly round. His heart beat high against his side. His words were faltering, broken, slow. “ Arise, son of ocean, arise, chief of the dark brown shields ! I see the dark, the mountain-stream of battle ! The deep-moving strength of the sons of Erin ! The car, the car of war comes on, like the flame of death ! the rapid car of Cuthullin, the noble son of Semo ! It bends behind, like a wave near a rock ; like the sun-streaked mist of the heath ⁴³. Its

As thick as insects play---

That drawn by milky streams at *evening* hours,
In *gathered* swarms surround the rural bowers ;
From pail to pail with busy *murmur* run
The gilded legions, glittering in the sun.

⁴² Or rustling winds roar *in the* distant woods. *Such is the noise of Gormal, before the white tops of my waves arise.*] VIRG. Georg. i. 556.

Continuo *ventis surgentibus*, aut *freta ponti*
Incipiunt agitata *tumescere*, et aridus altis
Montibus audire fragor ; aut *resonantia longe*
Littora misceri, et *nemorum increbescere murmur*.

⁴³ The rapid car of Cuthullin. It bends behind, like a wave

sides are embossed with stones, and sparkle like the sea round the boat of night. Of polished yew is its beam ; its seat of the smoothest bone ⁴⁴. The sides are replenished with spears ; the bottom is the foot-stool of heroes ⁴⁵ ! Before the

near a rock, like the golden mist of the heath.] First Edit.
POPE's *Iliad*, v. 897.

Braces of gold suspend the moving throne ;
The car behind an arching figure bore,
The bending concave formed an arch before.

But the braces of gold, and the bending concave, as if too refined for Ossian, are expressed by comparisons.

⁴⁴ *Its sides are embossed with stones. Of polished yew is its beam ; its seat of the smoothest bone.*] OVID. *Metam.* ii. 107.

Aureus axis erat, temo aureus, aurea summæ
Curvatura rotæ, radiorum argenteus ordo.
Per juga chrysolithi, positæque ex ordine gemmæ
Clara repercusso reddebant lumina Phoebo.

Gold was the beam, the wheels were orb'd with gold,
The seat, with party coloured gems was bright.
Apollo shined amid the glare of light.

ADDISON.

“ *And sparkle, like the sea round the boat of night ;*” a better translation than Addison's, of *Clara repercusso reddebant lumina Phoebo* ; but derived apparently from Dryden's Virgil. *ÆN.* v. 186.

Sparkles the briny main, and the vexed ocean fries.

⁴⁵ *The sides are replenished with spears ; the bottom is the foot-stool of heroes.*] King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon. He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold ; the covering thereof of purple ;

right side of the car is seen the snorting horse ! The high-maned, broad-breasted, proud, wide-leaping, strong steed of the hill. Loud and resounding is his hoof⁴⁶ ; the spreading of his mane above, is like a stream of smoke on a ridge of rocks. Bright are the sides of the steed ! his name is Sulin-Sifadda !

“ Before the left side of the car is seen the snorting horse ! The thin-maned, high-headed, strong-hoofed, fleet, bounding son of the hill : his name is Dusronnal, among the stormy sons of the sword ! A thousand thongs bind the car

the *midst* thereof being *paved with love*, for the daughters of Jerusalem.---*Song of Solomon*, iii. 9.

Where there is no imitation, there is no compound resemblance of thought and style. There is no resemblance, for instance, between the chariot of Solomon, and Juno's car in the *Iliad*, or the chariot of the sun in Ovid ; but, the rapid car of Cuthullin is at once an imitation of the whole. It *bends* like Juno's car, *behind* ; its *sides* are studded with *gems*, like the chariot of the sun ; a degree of magnificence unknown in the most refined ages ; and, the *bottom* thereof of gold, the *midst* thereof being *paved with love*, is converted into the sides, replenished with spears, and the *bottom*, the footstool of heroes. Yet Blair would persuade us, that this was merely a horse litter, set with Scotch pebbles.

⁴⁶ Loud resounding is *his hoof*.] GRAY.

With necks in thunder cloathed, and *long resounding pace*.
“ With necks in *thunder* cloathed.” “ The spreading of his *mane* above, is like a *stream of smoke*.”

on high. Hard polished bits shine in a wreath of foam. Thin thongs bright-studded with gems, bend on the stately necks of the steeds. The steeds, that like wreaths of mist fly over the streamy vales ! The wildness of deer is in their course, the strength of eagles descending on the prey ⁴⁷. Their noise is like the blast of winter, on the sides of the snow-headed Gormal.

⁴⁷ *The wildness of deer is in their course, the strength of eagles descending on their prey.*] Saul and Jonathan were *swifter* than eagles, they were *stronger* than lions. 2. Sam. i. 23. My days have passed away, as the eagle that *hasteth to her prey*. Job, ix. 26. HAB. i. 8.

The original of Cuthullin's chariot is an Irish ballad, in the dialogue form, on the appearance of a number of chariots and horsemen on the plain. It contains the names of the hero, and his two horses ; but no description whatsoever of the chariot, no reference to any epic poem ; much less the impropriety of putting such minute particulars, as the ornaments of the chariot, and the very names and trappings of the horses, into the mouth of a breathless and terrified scout. In the course of Johnson's journey through the Highlands, Boswell proposed, as a test of the authenticity of Ossian, that Mr Macqueen, whose evidence had been produced by Blair, should repeat such passages as he knew of the original, while another gentleman examined the translation. Mr Macqueen then (among other Irish ballads,) repeated, in Earse, a description of one of the horses in Cuthullin's car. Mr Macleod said, Mr Macpherson's English was *nothing like it*.---BOSWELL'S *Journal*. Yet, the same gentleman assured Blair, that " he had heard the *description* of Cuthullin's car, repeated to several, with some variations. It

“Within the car is seen the chief ; the strong-armed son of the sword. The hero’s name is Cuthullin, son of Semo, king of shells. His red cheek is like my polished yew. The look of his blue-rolling eye is wide, beneath the dark arch of his brow. His hair flies from his head like a flame, as bending forward, he wields the spear. Fly, king of ocean, fly ! He comes, like a storm, along the streamy vale !”

“When did I fly,” replied the king ? “When fled Swaran from the battle of spears ? When did I shrink from danger, chief of the little soul ? I met the storm of Gormal, when the foam of my waves beat high. I met the storm of the clouds ; shall Swaran fly from a hero ? Were Fingal himself before me, my soul should not darken with fear. Arise to battle, my thousands ! pour round me like the echoing main. Gather round the bright steel of your king ;

is very grand in the original. There are four horses described in it, with a string of epithets applied to each, of which the translator dropped a few through his fingers.”---*Letter from Mr Macqueen to Dr Blair*. Nothing but the principal fact is concealed, that there is no description whatsoever of the chariot, and that no part of the pretended translation, the names of the horses excepted, is to be found in the original.

strong as the rocks of my land ; that meet the storm, with joy, and stretch their dark pines to the wind !”

Like autumn’s dark storms, pouring from two echoing hills, toward each other approached the heroes. Like two deep streams from high rocks meeting, mixing, roaring, on the plain ⁴⁸ ; loud, rough, and dark in battle, meet Lochlin and Innis-fail. Chief mixes his strokes with chief, and man with man ; steel, clanging, sounds on

⁴⁸ *Like autumn’s dark storms pouring from two echoing hills.—Like two deep streams from high rocks, meeting, mixing, roaring on the plain.*] POPE’S *Iliad*, iv. 516.

As *torrents roll*, encreased by numerous rills,
With rage impetuous *down their echoing hills*,
Rush to the vales, and *poured* along the plain,
Roar through a thousand channels to the main ;
The distant shepherd, trembling, hears the sound.
So *mix* both hosts, and so their cries rebound.

VIRGIL’S *Æneid*, xii. 523.

Aut ubi decurso rapido, de montibus altis,
Dant sonitum *spumosi amnes*, et in æquora currunt
Quisque suum populatus iter.

“ This comparison of rivers *meeting* and *roaring*, with two armies *mingling* in battle, is an image, which, to say the least of it, was worthy the invention of Homer, and the imitation of Virgil.” POPE’S note, *Iliad*, ib. But in Ossian, there is no imitation as in Virgil ; nothing but the original invention of Homer.

steel. Helmets are cleft on high. Blood bursts and smokes around ⁴⁹. Strings murmur on the polished yews. Darts rush along the sky. Spears fall like the circles of light, which gild the face of night. As the noise of the troubled ocean, when roll the waves on high. As the last peal of thunder in heaven ⁵⁰, such is the din of war ! Though Cormac's hundred bards were

⁴⁹ *Blood bursts and smokes around.*] ῥέε δ' αἷμα γαῖα. *Iliad*, iv. 451." "Blood forms a lake around." *Highlander*, ii. 115.

The reader may compare this passage with a similar one in Homer. MACPHERSON.

Now *shield* with *shield*, with *helmet* *helmet* closed,
To *armour* *armour*, *lance* to *lance* opposed,
Host against host, with shadowy squadrons drew,
The sounding *darts* in iron tempest flew.

With streaming blood the slippery fields are dyed,
While slaughtered heroes swell the dreadful tide.

As torrents roll, &c.

The difference between the two passages is this, that, in Osian, the simile of the two torrents precedes, and in Homer, it succeeds the description of the battle.

⁵⁰ *As the noise of the troubled ocean, when roll the waves on high. As the last peal of thunder in heaven.*] From the introductory simile to the first battle in the *Iliad*.

POPE's *Iliad*, iv. 479.

As, when the winds, ascending by degrees,
First move the whitening surface of the seas---
The *wave* behind *rolls* on the *wave* before,---
Till with the *growing storm* the *deeps* arise,
Foam o'er the rocks, and *thunder* to the *skies*.

there, to give the fight to song ; feeble was the voice of a hundred bards, to send the deaths to future times ⁵¹ ! For many were the deaths of heroes ; wide poured the blood of the brave !

Mourn, ye sons of song, mourn the death of the noble Sithallin ⁵². Let the sighs of Fiona rise, on the lone plains of her lovely Ardan. They fell, like two hinds of the desert, by the hands

⁵¹ *Though Cormac's hundred bards were there—feeble was the voice of an hundred bards.]—to give the fight to song. Οὐδ' ἐμοὶ δέκα μὲν γλῶσσαι. Iliad, ii. 489.*

GEORG. iii. 42. ÆN. vi. 625.

Non ego cuncta meis amplecti *versibus* opto,
Non mihi si linguæ *centum* sint, oraque *centum*,
Ferreæ vox, omnes scelerum comprehendere formas,
Omnia pænarum percurrere nomina possim.

⁵² Sithallin signifies, *a handsome man* ; Fiona, *a fair maid* ; and Ardan, *pride*. MACPHERSON.

The apostrophe to Cormac's hundred bards, and the next apostrophe to the maid of Inistore, are both taken from two beautiful apostrophe's in Hardyknute, introduced, as here, in the very midst of the battle. “ Mourn, ye sons of the song ; mourn the death of the noble Sithallin. Let the sighs of Fiona rise, on the lone plains of her lovely Ardan.”

Wae to the knight he ettled at,
Lament now queen Elgreid !
High dames, to wail your darling's fate,
His youth and comely meid.

of the mighty Swaran ⁵³; when, in the midst of thousands, he roared; like the shrill spirit of a storm ⁵⁴. He sits dim, on the clouds of the north, and enjoys the death of the mariner. Nor slept thy hand by thy side ⁵⁵, chief of the

⁵³ *They fell, like two hinds of the desert, by the hands of the mighty Swaran.*] MILTON's *Par. Lost.* iv. 403.

Then, as a tyger, who by chance hath spied,
In some purlieu, *two gentle fawns* at play,
Strait couches close, then rising, changes oft
His couchant watch, as one who chose his ground,
Whence rushing, he might surest sieze them both,
Griped in each paw.

⁵⁴ *Like the shrill spirit of a storm.*] The *genius* of the coming storm, in THOMSON's *Winter*.

Then too, they say, through all the burdened air,
Long groans are heard, *shrill* sounds, and distant sighs,
That, uttered by the *demon* of the night,
Warn the devoted wretch of woe and death.

"And enjoys the death of the mariner." But, "He *sits dim* on the clouds of the north:" from MILTON, *Par. Lost*, v. 156.

Who *sit'st* above these heavens,
To us invisible, or *dimly* seen
In these thy lowest works.

And in the *Hunter*, an early poem of Macpherson's;
To shun him, *sailors* vainly billows cleave,
He sits incumbent on each *sable* wave.

⁵⁵ Nor slept thy hand by thy side.] MILTON's phraseology was familiar to Ossian. *Par. Reg.* iv. 413.

isle of mist ⁵⁶ ! Many were the deaths of thine arm, Cuthullin, thou son of Semo ! His sword was like the beam of heaven when it pierces the sons of the vale ⁵⁷ ; when the people are blasted and fall, and all the hills are burning around. Dusronnel snorted over the bodies of heroes.

Nor slept the winds

Within their stony caves.

⁵⁶ The Isle of Sky ; not improperly called the *isle of mist*, as its high hills, which catch the clouds from the western ocean, occasion almost continual rains. MACPHERSON.

The Isle of mist, *Innis Ceathach* ; Macpherson's etymological corruption of *Innis Sgiath*, the isle of SKY, so named (Scia) by Adomnan, in the seventh century. PINKERTON'S *Vita Sancti*. 82. The Irish *Innis*, the Scottish *Inch*, and the English *Isle*, are all corruptions of the Latin *Insula*.

⁵⁷ *His sword was like the beam of heaven, when it pierces the sons of the vale.*] THOMSON'S *Summer*.

And yet, its flame unquenched,

Th' unconquerable *lightning* struggles through,

Ragged and fierce; or in red whirling balls,

And *fires* the *mountains* with redoubled rage.

Black from the stroke above, the smouldering pine

Stands a sad shattered trunk, and black below,

A lifeless group, the *blasted cattle lie*.

“ And fires the mountains, &c.” “ When the people are blasted and fall, and all the hills are burning around,” &c. See *Dar-thula*, 19.

Sifadda bathed his hoof in blood ⁵⁸. The battle lay behind him, as groves overturned on the desart of Cromla ; when the blast has passed the heath, laden with the spirits of night ⁵⁹ !

Weep on the rocks of roaring winds, O maid of Inistore ! Bend thy fair head over the waves, thou lovelier than the ghost of the hills ; when it moves, in a sun-beam, at noon, over the silence of Morven ⁶⁰ ! He is fallen ! thy youth is

⁵⁸ *Dusronnal snorted over the bodies of heroes. Sifadda bathed his hoof in blood.*] POPE'S *Iliad*, xx. 581.

So the fierce coursers, as the chariot rolls,
Tread down whole ranks, and crush out heroes' souls.
Dash'd from their *hoofs*, while o'er the dead they fly,
Black bloody drops the smoking chariot dye.

⁵⁹ *As groves overturned in the desert—when the blast has passed the heath, laden with the spirits of night.*] See note ⁵⁵. From *Par. Reg.* iv. 413.

Nor slept the winds
Within their stony caves, but rushed abroad,
From the four hinges of the world, and fell
On the vexed *wilderness*, whose tallest pines,
Though rooted deep as high, and sturdiest oaks,
Bowed their stiff necks, laden with stormy blasts,
Or torn up sheer, &c.

See also the *Highlander*, iii. 1. from POPE'S *Iliad*, xvi. 923.

⁶⁰ *The spirit of the hills, when it moves in a sun-beam at noon, over the silence of Morven.*] Third Edit. THOMSON'S *Summer*.

low ! pale beneath the sword of Cuthullin ⁶¹ !
 No more shall valour raise thy love to match the
 blood of kings. Trenar, graceful Trenar died,
 O maid of Inistore ! His grey dogs are howling
 at home ; they see his passing ghost. His bow

Here frequent at the visionary hour,
 When musing midnight reigns, or *silent noon*,
 Angelic harps are in full concert heard,
 And voices chanting from the *wood crowned hill*.

Summer.

From *Paradise Lost*, iv. 608.

Often from the steep
 Of *echoing hill* or thicket, have we heard
 Celestial voices to the midnight air,
 Sole, or responsive to each others note.

“ These,” says Blair, “ are *gentle* spirits ; descending on sun-beams ; fair moving on the plain ; their forms white and bright ; their voices sweet ; and their visits to men propitious.” From his own description of those gentle spirits, Blair might have surely perceived, that they are no other than Milton’s angels descending on sun-beams.

⁶¹ *Pale beneath the sword of Cuchullin.*] “ Weep on the rocks of roaring winds---*bend thy fair head* over the *waves*---he is fallen, *thy youth is low*,” &c. ; from the original apostrophe to Emma, in Hardyknute. *Infra*, ⁷⁶.

On Norway’s coast the widowed dame
 May *wash the rocks* with *tears*,
 May *lang luke* owre the *shipless seas*,
 Before her mate appears.
 Cease, Emma, cease to hope in vain,
Thy lord lies in the *clay*.

is in the hall unstrung. No sound is in the hill
of his hinds !

As roll a thousand waves to the rocks, so Swaran's host came on. As meets a rock a thousand waves ⁶², so Erin met Swaran of spears. Death raises all his voices around, and mixes with the sounds of shields. Each hero is a pillar of darkness ; the sword a beam of fire in his hand ⁶³. The field echoes from wing to wing, as a hundred hammers that rise, by turns, on the red son of the furnace ⁶⁴. Who are these on

⁶² *As roll a thousand waves to the rocks--as meets a rock a thousand waves.*] So in the *Highlander*, ii. 127---37.

The Scots, a *stream*, would sweep the Danes away,
The Danes, a *rock*, repel the Scots array.---
The ranks of Sweno stand in firm array,
As hoary *rocks* repel the raging *sea*.

⁶³ *Each hero is a pillar of darkness. The sword a beam of fire in his hand.*] From the *pillar* of the *cloud*, and the *pillar* of *fire*, that went alternately before the Jews.

⁶⁴ *As an hundred hammers--on the red son of the furnace.*] “ Like the strokes of *two hammers*, was the battle of the two kings ;” (Irish ballad of Fingal and Magnus,) converted, by a classical amplification, into the *hundred hammers* that rise by turns. Illi inter sese---brachia tollunt in numerum. *Æn.* viii. 452. *Infra*, iv. n. 14.

By turns their arms advance in equal time,
By turns their hands descend, and *hammers* chime.

DRYDEN.

Lena's heath, these so gloomy and dark ? Who are these like two clouds, and their swords like lightening above them ⁶⁵ ! The little hills are troubled around ; the rocks tremble with all their moss. Who is it but Ocean's son and the car-borne chief of Erin ? Many are the anxious eyes of their friends, as they see them dim on the heath. But night conceals the chiefs in clouds, and ends the dreadful fight !

It was on Cromla's shaggy side that Dorglas had placed the deer ⁶⁶ ; the early fortune of the

⁶⁵ *Who are these like two clouds, and their swords like lightening above them ?*] MILTON's Encounter of Satan and Death. Par. Lost. ii. 714.

Such a frown

Each cast at other, as when *two black clouds---*
 With *heaven's artillery* fraught, come rattling on
 Over the Caspian.
 So *frowned* the mighty combatants, that *hell*
 Grew darker at their frown.

Or, "these *so gloomy and dark*," that "the little hills are troubled around ; the rocks tremble with all their moss."

⁶⁶ The ancient manner of preparing feasts after hunting, is handed down by tradition. A pit, lined with smooth stones, was made ; and near it stood a heap of smooth flat stones of the flint kind. The stones, as well as the pit, were properly heated with heath. Then they laid some venison in the bottom, and a stratum of the stones above it ; and thus they did alternately till the pit was full. The whole was covered over with

chace, before the heroes left the hill. A hundred youths collect the heath ; ten warriors wake the fire ; three hundred chuse the polish'd stones. The feast is smoking wide ! Cuthullin, chief of Erin's war, resumed his mighty soul. He stood upon his beamy spear, and spoke to the son of songs ; to Carril of other times, the grey-haired son of Kinfena. " Is this feast spread for me alone, and the king of Lochlin on Erin's shore ; far from the deer of his hills, and sounding halls

heath to confine the steam. Whether this is probable I cannot say ; but some pits are shewn, which the vulgar say, were used in that manner. MACPHERSON.

This ancient manner of preparing feasts after hunting, is transcribed from Keating's account of the Fions, the militia of Ireland under King Cormac. They lived at free quarters on the people in winter, but subsisted by hunting and fishing, during the summer. After each days chase, their huntsman was dispatched to a proper place, where great fires were kindled, into which they threw large stones, and a pit was then filled with alternate layers of red-hot stones, and venison wrapped in rushes, and covered up till the meat was properly stewed. KEATING'S *Hist.* 272. In the simplicity of Homer's description, we trace minutely the whole process of the feast, or sacrifice ; but the modern Ossian merely informs us, that ten heroes blew the fire ; an hundred gathered the heath, three hundred the polished stones, and then, like a French critic, shrinks from the indelicacy of dressing and preparing " the smoking feast."

of his feasts ? Rise, Carril of other times ; carry my words to Swaran. Tell him from the roaring of waters, that Cuthullin gives his feast. Here let him listen to the sound of my groves, amidst the clouds of night. For cold and bleak the blustering winds ⁶⁷ rush over the foam of his seas. Here let him praise the trembling harp, and hear the songs of heroes !”

Old Carril went, with softest voice. He called the king of dark-brown shields ! “ Rise from the skins of thy chace, rise, Swaran, king of groves ! Cuthullin gives the joy of shells. Partake the feast of Erin’s blue-eyed chief !” He answered like the sullen sound of Cromla before a storm. “ Though all thy daughters, Inisfail ! should stretch their arms of snow ; should raise the heavings of their breasts, and softly roll their eyes of love ; yet, fixed as Lochlin’s thousand rocks, here Swaran should remain ; till morn, with the young beams of the east,

⁶⁷ For cold and bleak the blustering winds.] From the ballad, *Up in the morning early*.

Cold and raw the north did blow,

Bleak in the morning early.

Imitated also in Hardyknute,

Loud and *shrill* blew the westlin wind.

shall light me to the death of Cuthullin. Pleasant to my ear is Lochlin's wind ! It rushes over my seas ! It speaks aloft in all my shrouds⁶⁸, and brings my green forests to my mind : The green forests of Gormal, which often echoed to my winds, when my spear was red in the chace of the boar. Let dark Cuthullin yield to me the ancient throne of Cormac ; or Erin's torrents shall shew from their hills, the red foam of the blood of his pride !"

" Sad is the sound of Swaran's voice," said Carril of other times ! " Sad to himself alone," said the blue-eyed son of Semo. " But, Carril, raise the voice on high ; tell the deeds of other times. Send thou the night away in song ; and give the joy of grief. For many heroes and maids of love, have moved on Inis-fail : And lovely are the songs of woe, that are heard in Albion's rocks ; when the noise of the chace is

⁶⁸ *It speaks aloft in all my shrouds.*] " *Speak* on the pinions of the southern gale." *Highlander*, and in the *Hunter* ;

The murmuring north-west, with refreshing gales,

Hoarse *whistles* through the *shrouds*, and swells the sails.

But the winds whistling aloft in the shrouds, correspond but ill with sails of deerskin, and thongs for ropes.

past, and the streams of Cona answer to the voice of Ossian ⁶⁹.”

“ In other days,” Carril replies, “ came the sons of Ossian to Erin ! A thousand vessels bound-ed on waves to Ullin’s lovely plains. The sons of Inis-fail arose, to meet the race of dark-brown shields. Cairbar, first of men, was there, and Grudar, stately youth ! Long had they strove for the spotted bull, that lowed on Golbun’s ⁷⁰ echoing heath. Each claimed him as his own. Death was often at the point of their steel ! side by side the heroes fought ; the strangers of Ocean fled. Whose name was fairer on the hill, than the name of Cairbar and Grudar ! But ah ! why ever lowed the bull, on Golbon’s echoing heath ! They saw him leaping like snow. The wrath of the chiefs returned !

“ On Lubar’s grassy banks they fought ; Grudar fell in his blood. Fierce Cairbar came to the vale, where Brassolis, fairest of his sisters, all alone, raised the song of grief. She sung of the actions of Grudar, the youth of her secret

⁶⁹ The Cona, here mentioned, is that small river that runs through Glenco in Argyleshire. MACPHERSON.

⁷⁰ Golb-bhean, as well as Cromleach, signifies *a crooked hill*. MACPHERSON. See note ²¹.

soul ! She mourned him in the field of blood ⁷¹ ; but still she hoped for his return. Her white bosom is seen from her robe, as the moon from the clouds of night ⁷², *when its edge heaves white on the view, from the darkness, which covers its orb.* Her voice was softer than the harp to raise the song of grief. Her soul was fixed on Grudar. The secret look of her eye was his. “ When shalt thou come in thine arms, thou mighty in the war ? ”

“ Take, Brassolis,” Cairbar came and said, “ take, Brassolis, this shield of blood. Fix it on high within my hall, the armour of my foe ! ” Her soft heart beat against her side. Distracted, pale, she flew. She found her youth in all his blood ; she died on Cromla’s heath. Here

⁷¹ *She mourned him in the field of blood.*] “ Wherefore, that field was called the *field of blood* unto this day.” MAT. xxvii. 8. ACTS, i. 19.

⁷² *Her white bosom is seen from her robe, as the moon from the clouds of night.*] The remainder of the simile, not inserted in the first editions, “ when its edge heaves white on the view, from the darkness which covers its orb,” points out the original in THOMSON’S *Autumn*.

Meanwhile the moon,

Full orb'd, and breaking through the scattered clouds,

Shews her broad visage in the crimsoned east.

The same simile may be found in the *Highlander*, vi. 21.

rests their dust, Cuthullin ⁷³, these lonely yews sprung from their tombs, and *shade* them from the storm ⁷⁴. Fair was Brassolis on the plain ! Stately was Grudar on the hill ! The bard shall preserve their names, and send them down to future times !”

“ Pleasant is thy voice, O Carril,” said the blue-eyed chief of Erin. “ Pleasant are the words of other times ! They are like the calm shower of spring ⁷⁵ ; when the sun looks on the

⁷³ Here rests *their* dust, Cuthullin.] GRAY’S *Elegy*.

Here rests his head upon the lap of earth.

⁷⁴ *These lonely yews shade them from the storm.*] In the first editions, “ These *two* lonely yews sprung from their tombs, and *wish to meet on high* ;” the alteration of which was suggested to the translator by Blair’s criticism ; that “ this sympathy of the trees with the lovers, might be reckoned to border on an Italian conceit.” The conceit which the critic reprobates, and the translator has rejected, was not worse than “ Grudar like a sun-beam fell ;” (in the latter editions, he “ fell in his blood ;”) or, “ Erin’s torrents shall shew the red foam of the blood of his pride ;” (p. 45.) or, another passage, “ But ah ! why ever lowed the bull ? the spotted bull, leaping like snow !” Et vitula tu dignus et hic. But the conceit was adopted from one of the Irish ballads concerning Deirdae, (Macpherson’s Darthula) ; and may be found in many English ballads both of the true, and of the pseud-antique. See *Reliques of Ancient Engl. Poetry*, iii. 120.—241. ; *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, ii. 128.

⁷⁵ *The words of other times---are like the calm shower of spring.*] HOMER’S *Iliad*, iii. 222.

Καὶ ΕΠΕΑ ΝΙΦΑΔΕΣΣΙΝ ἑοικότα ΧΕΙΜΕΡΙΗΣΙΝ.

field, and the light cloud flies over the hills. O strike the harp in praise of my love ! the lonely sun-beam of Dunscaith. Strike the harp in the praise of Bragela ; she that I left in the Isle of Mist, the spouse of Semo's son ! Dost thou raise thy fair face from the rock, to find the sails of Cuthullin ? The sea is rolling distant far ; its white foam deceives thee for my sails. Retire, for it is night, my love ⁷⁶ ; the dark

“ His *words like showers of winter snow* ;” (MACPHERSON'S *Homer*, v. i. p. 84.) altered to the *calm shower of spring*, from a text repeatedly imitated in the sequel. “ My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the *showers upon the grass*.” DEUT. xxxii, 2.

⁷⁶ *Retire, for it is night, my love.*] “ With apostrophes, our poet abounds. Witness the apostrophe to the maid of Inistore ; and that inimitably fine one of Cuthullin to Bragela. He commands the harp to be struck in her praise ; and the mention of Bragela's name immediately suggesting a crowd of tender ideas, ‘ Dost thou raise thy fair face from the rocks,’ he exclaims, ‘ to find the sails of Cuthullin ? &c. The sea is rolling far distant, and its white foam shall deceive thee for my sails.” BLAIR.

The apostrophe to Bragela is, in fact, a repetition of the apostrophe to the maid of Inistore, both of which are derived from the same apostrophe to Emma, in *Hardyknute*. “ Dost thou raise thy *fair face* from the *rocks*, to find the sails of Cuthullin ?” “ Weep on the *rocks* of roaring winds. *Bend thy fair head* over the waves !” “ The *sea* is roaring, distant far ; its white foam shall *deceive thee for my sails*.”

winds sing in thy hair. Retire to the halls of my feasts ; think of the times that are past. I will not return till the storm of war is ceased. O Connal ! speak of war and arms, and send her from my mind. Lovely, with her flowing hair, is the white-bosomed daughter of Sorglan."

Connal, slow to speak, replied, " Guard against the race of Ocean. Send thy troop of night abroad, and watch the strength of Swaran.

On Norway's coast the widowed dame
May wash the rocks with tears ;
May *lang luke owre* the *shipless seas*,
Before her mate appears.
Cease, Emma, cease to hope in vain.

" And now, his imagination being wrought up to conceive her as at that moment really in this situation, he becomes afraid of the harm she may receive from the inclemency of the night ; and, with an enthusiasm happy and affecting, though beyond the cautious strain of modern poetry, he proceeds to bid her " retire, for it is night, my love ; the dark winds sigh in thy hair." BLAIR.

Judicious apostrophes, to absent or inanimate objects, are among the most beautiful figures of poetry ; but, to desire an object, present only in imagination, to retire from the night air, or the weather, is the mere affectation of poetical enthusiasm. Let us suppose Ulysses, sitting on the shore of Calypso's isle, to apostrophise Penelope, bidding her retire to her palace from the night air ; and we shall soon discover, whether this is an enthusiasm, " happy and affecting beyond the cautious strain of modern poetry," or the sentimental extravagance of a modern romance.

Cuthullin ! I am for peace, till the race of Selma come ⁷⁷ ; till Fingal come, the first of men, and beam, like the sun, on our fields !” The hero struck the shield of alarms, the warriors of the night moved on ! The rest lay in the heath of the deer, and slept beneath the dusky wind. The ghosts of the lately dead were near, and swam on the gloomy clouds : and far distant, in the dark silence of Lena, the feeble voices of death were faintly heard.

⁷⁷ *The race of Selma.*] “The race of the *desart*,” in the first editions ; one of the many proofs, that there was no prototype for the pretended translation. Fingal’s residence was at *Almhuin*, the hill of *Allen*, in the province of Leinster ; (Keating, 271,) which Macpherson has uniformly altered to Albion ; but *Selma* seems to be either a transposition of *Salem*, or *Sailm*, in the Irish ballads of Ossian and Phadrich n’en *Sailm*, Patrick of *Psalms*, converted into Selma. Neither Selma, the palace of the great Fingal, nor the ancient kingdom or kings of Morven, were ever heard of, or known to exist in Scotland. The plains of Troy, the tomb of Achilles, the Scamander, Simois, and the topographical scenes and descriptions of the *Iliad*, were at all times familiarly known to the Greeks ; and the situation of Selma in Scotland, and of Tura, Cromla, and Lubar, &c. in Ireland, should have been preserved by the same traditions with the poems themselves. But the translator was ignorant of the kingdom of Dalriada, and of the genuine antiquities of his own country, when he converted Morven, a single parish in Argyleshire, into a kingdom comprehending the north west of Scotland.

FINGAL,

AN

EPIC POEM;

BOOK II.

ARGUMENT TO BOOK II.

The ghost of Crugal, one of the Irish heroes who was killed in battle, appearing to Connal, foretells the defeat of Cuthullin in the next battle ; and earnestly advises him to make peace with Swaran. Connal communicates the vision ; but Cuthullin is inflexible ; from a principle of honour, he would not be the first to sue for peace, and he resolved to continue the war. Morning comes ; Swaran proposes dishonourable terms to Cuthullin, which are rejected. The battle begins, and is obstinately fought for some time, until, upon the flight of Grumal, the whole Irish army gave way. Cuthullin and Connal cover their retreat : Carril leads them to a neighbouring hill, whither they are soon followed by Cuthullin himself, who descries the fleet of Fingal making towards the coast ; but night coming on, he lost sight of it again. Cuthullin, dejected after his defeat, attributes his ill success to the death of Ferda, his friend, whom he had killed some time before. Carril, to shew that ill success did not always attend those who innocently killed their friends, introduces the episode of Comal and Galvina. **MAC-PHERSON.**

FIN G A L.

BOOK II.

CONNAL' lay by the sound of the mountain stream, beneath the aged tree. A stone, with

¹ The scene here described will appear natural to those who have been in the Highlands of Scotland. The poet removes him to a distance from the army, to add more horror to the description of Crugal's ghost, by the loneliness of the place. **MACPHERSON.**

"The scene of Connal's repose, so *familiar* to those who have been in the Highlands," (first edit.) betrays the real origin of the poems. The supposed translator, forgetting that the scene was laid in Ireland, thought only of that which he beheld and described in the Highlands of Scotland. But Macpherson's early poetry abounds in ghosts, which are introduced without reserve, in the *Hunter* and *Highlander*, and in the verses on an officer killed at Quebec.

its moss, supported his head. Shrill through the heath of Lena, he heard the voice of night ². At distance from the heroes he lay; the son of the sword feared no foe! The hero beheld, in his rest, a dark-red stream of fire rushing down from the hill. Crugal sat upon the beam, a chief who fell in fight. He fell by the hand of Swaran, striving in the battle of heroes. His face is like the beam of the setting moon. His robes are of the clouds of the hill. His eyes are two decaying flames ³! Dark is the wound

² Shrill through the heath of Lena, he heard the voice of night.] And, at the close of the preceding book, “ Far distant in the dark silence of Lena, the feeble voices of death were faintly heard.” A repetition from THOMSON’S *Winter*. *Supra*, i. 54.

Through all the burdened air

Long groans are heard, shrill sounds, and distant sighs,

That, uttered by the demon of the night,

Warn the devoted wretch of woe and death.

³ His face is like the beam of the setting moon; his robes are of the clouds of the hill; his eyes are two decaying flames.] “ His voice like the gale of the reedy Lego.” *Iliad*, xxiii. 66.

Πάντ’ αὐτῷ μέγεθος τε καὶ ΟΜΜΑΤΑ κάλ’ εἰκυῖα,

Καὶ ΦΩΝΗΝ καὶ τοῖα περὶ χροῖ ΕΙΜΑΤΑ ἔστο.

In the same robe he living wore, he came,

In stature, voice, and pleasing look, the same.

POPE.

Achilles was impressed with the appearance of the ghost of Patroclus, because it was εἶκτο δὲ θεσκελον αὐτῷ, in stature, voice,

of his breast ! “ Crugal,” said the mighty Connal, “ son of Dedgal famed on the hill of hinds ! Why so pale and sad, thou breaker of the shields ? Thou hast never been pale for fear ! What disturbs the departed Crugal ? ” Dim, and in tears, he stood ⁴, and stretched his pale hand

and eyes, and even in its robes, the very image of his friend ; and the same circumstances, diversified only by similes, are preserved in Ossian. But Crugal, sitting on a beam of fire, his face like the beam of the setting moon, his eyes two decaying flames, (in a setting moon-beam !) his *robes of the clouds of the hill*,

Lights up the *clouds*, those beauteous *robes of heaven* ;

THOMSON.

his voice, like the gale of the reedy Lego, and his departure like the darkened moon ; present nothing distinct, or even intelligible to the mind. The belief of all ages is, that ghosts are an exact resemblance of the deceased, like the image in a mirror, unsubstantial, and perceptible to the sight alone ; but, in the moon-beams, clouds, and in the decaying flames of Crugal’s face and person, Connal never could have recognised his dark red friends. In assuming the garb of antiquity, Macpherson, solicitous to avoid the appearance, either of classical or of modern poetry, degenerated into bombast, on departing from the common opinion of mankind.

⁴ Dim and in tears he stood,] and above, “ Dark is the wound of his breast. Why so pale and sad.” From the *Highlander*, v. 189.

Silent and sad the spectre stood confessed,

And shewed the streaming flood gates of his breast.

“ And stretched his pale hand over the hero.” MACPHERSON’S *Hunter*.

Then stretched his *skinny hand*, and thus he spoke.

over the hero. Faintly he raised his feeble voice ⁵, like the gale of the reedy Lego !

“My spirit, Connal, is on my hills : my corse on the sands of Erin. Thou shalt never talk with Crugal, nor find his lone steps in the heath ⁶. I am light as the blast of Cromla. I move like the shadow of mist ⁷ ! Connal, son of

⁵ *Faintly he raised his feeble voice.*] Ωχετο ΤΕΤΡΙΠΥΙΑ.---
Iliad, xxiii. 10.

And hears a *feeble* lamentable cry.

POPE.

“Like the gale of the *reedy* Lego.” *Highlander*, v. 195.

He *hissed* his way along,

As breezes sing through reeds their shrilly song.

⁶ *Thou shalt never talk with Crugal, nor find his lone steps on the heath.*] POPE’S *Iliad*, xxiii. 96.

No more shall meet Achilles and his friend,

No more our thoughts to those we loved make known,

Nor quit the dearest to *converse alone*.

⁷ *I move like the shadow of mist.*] Yea though I walk through the valley of the *shadow of death*. *Psalms*, xxiii. 4, converted immediately into “The *cloud of death*, that hovers, dark, over the plains of *Lenæa*,” from THOMSON’S *Summer*.

Where frequent o’er the sickening city, plague—

Descends from Æthiopia’s poisoned woods, &c.

And o’er his *guilty domes*

She draws a close incumbent *cloud of death*.

And Thomson, again, from Shakespeare, *Timon of Athens*, A. iii. S. 1. 1. 3,

Be as a planetary *plague*, when Jove

Will o’er some *high-riced city*, hang his *poison*

In the *sick* air.

Colgar, I see a cloud of death : it hovers dark over the plains of Lena. The sons of green Erin must fall. Remove from the field of ghosts." Like the darkened moon he retired⁸, in the midst of the whistling blast. "Stay," said the mighty Connal, "stay, my dark-red friend. Lay by that beam of heaven, son of the windy Cromla ! What cave is thy lonely house ? What green-headed hill the place of thy repose ? Shall we not hear thee in the storm ? In the noise of the mountain-stream ? When the feeble sons of the wind come forth, and, scarcely seen, pass over the desert ?"

The soft-voiced Connal rose, in the midst of his sounding arms. He struck his shield above Cuthullin. The son of battle waked. "Why," said the ruler of the car, "comes Connal through my night ? My spear might turn against the sound ; and Cuthullin mourn the

⁸ *Like the darkened moon he retired.*] MILTON, *Par. Lost*. 1. 596.

Or from behind the *moon*——

Perplexes monarchs : *Darkened* so, yet shone.

"In the midst of the *whistling blast*." The *Hunter* ;
Thus said, he fades before the hunter's sight,
And nought is heard but the shrill *whistling blast*.

death of his friend. Speak, Connal; son of Colgar, speak, thy council is the sun of heaven!" "Son of Semo!" replied the chief, "the ghost of Crugal came from his cave. The stars dim-twinkled through his form. His voice was like the sound of a distant stream. He is a messenger of death! He speaks of the dark and narrow house! Sue for peace, O chief of Erin! or fly over the heath of Lena."

"He spoke to Connal," replied the hero, "though stars dim-twinkled through his form! Son of Colgar, it was the wind that murmured across thy ear. Or if it was the form⁹ of Cru-

⁹ The poet teaches us the opinions that prevailed in his time concerning the state of separate souls. From Connal's expression, "That the stars dim-twinkled through the form of Crugal," and Cuthullin's reply, we may gather, that they both thought the soul was material, something like the *εἰδωλον* of the ancient Greeks. MACPHERSON.

The stars *dim-twinkling* through his form, is a picturesque image, fortuitously produced by the adaptation of old Malcolm's ghost in the *Hunter*, to Crugal's in Fingal.

Her *twinkling eyes*, night's gloomy goddess shrouds,
In a dark vail of rain-condensed *clouds*.

Hunter.

"The stars *dim-twinkled* through his form," or, as in other passages, "from behind a *cloud*."

gal, why didst thou not force him to my sight ? Hast thou enquired where is his cave ? The house of that son of wind ? My sword might find that voice, and force his knowledge from Crugal. But small is his knowledge, Connal¹⁰ ; he was here to-day. He could not have gone beyond our hills ! who could tell him there of our fall ?” “ Ghosts fly on clouds, and ride on winds,” said Connal’s voice of wisdom. “ They rest together in their caves, and talk of mortal men.”

“ Then let them talk of mortal men ; of every man but Erin’s chief. Let me be forgot in their cave. I will not fly from Swaran ! If fall I must, my tomb shall rise, amidst the fame of future times. The hunter shall shed a tear on my stone ; sorrow shall dwell round the high-bosomed Bragèla. I fear not death, to fly I fear ! Fingal has seen me victorious ! Thou dim phantom of the hill, shew thyself to me ! come on thy beam of heaven, shew me my death in thine hand ; yet I will not fly, thou feeble son

¹⁰ *But small is his knowledge, Connal ;*] Ἀτὰρ ἐφύγε; αἶψα ἐκ τῆς ἀπύρτου.---Il. xxiii. 104. “ But all knowledge departs from the dead.” MACPHERSON’S *Homer*, ii. 359.

of the wind ! Go, son of Colgar, strike the shield. It hangs between the spears. Let my warriors rise to the sound, in the midst of the battles of Erin. Though Fingal delays his coming with the race of the stormy isles ; we shall fight, O Colgar's son, and die in the battle of heroes !”

The sound spreads wide. The heroes rise, like the breaking of a blue-rolling wave. They stood on the heath, like oaks, with all their branches round them ; when they echo to the stream of frost, and their withered leaves are rustling to the wind ! High Cromla's head of clouds is grey. Morning trembles on the half-enlightened ocean. The blue mist swims slowly by, and hides the sons of Inis-fail !

“ Rise ye,” said the king of the dark-brown shields, “ ye that came from Lochlin's waves.

“ *They stood on the heath like oaks with all their branches round them ; when their withered leaves are rustling to the wind.*] MILTON, *Par. Lost.* i. 611.

Yet faithful how they stood,
Their *glory withered* : as when heaven's fire
Hath scathed the forest *oaks*, or mountain pines,
With singed top their stately growth, though bare,
Stands on the blasted heath.

The sons of Erin have fled from our arms ; pursue them over the plains of Lena ! Morla, go to Cormac's hall. Bid them yield to Swaran ; before his people sink to the tomb ; and silence spread over his isle." They rose, rustling like a flock of sea-fowl, when the waves expel them from the shore¹². Their sound was like a thousand streams that meet in Cona's vale, when, after a stormy night, they turn their dark eddies beneath the pale light of the morn.

As the dark shades of autumn fly over the hills of grass¹³, so gloomy, dark, successive came the chiefs of Lochlin's echoing woods. Tall as the stag of Morven, moved stately before them,

¹² *Rose, rustling like a flock of sea-fowl, when the waves expel them from the shore.*] *Æn.* vi. 310.

Aut ad terram gurgite ab alto,
Quam multæ glomerantur aves, ubi frigidus annus
Trans pontum fugat, et terris immittit apricis.
Or *fowls*, by winter forced, forsake the floods.

DRYDEN.

¹³ *As the dark shades of Autumn fly over the hills of grass.*] From THOMSON'S *Autumn*. A frequent imitation.

The clouds *fly* different, and the sudden sun,
By fits effulgent, gilds the *illuminated fields*,
And *black* by *fits*, the shadows sweep along.

"So gloomy, dark, *successive*, &c."

the king¹⁴. His shining shield is on his side, like a flame on the heath at night¹⁵. When the world is silent and dark, and the traveller sees some ghost sporting in the beam ! *Dimly gleam the hills around, and shew indistinctly their oaks !* A blast from the troubled ocean, removed the settled mist. The sons of Erin appear, like a ridge of rocks on the coast ; *when mariners*

¹⁴ Tall as the stag of Morven, moved stately before them, the king.] In the first edition, *The king of groves.* Ἡὐτε βοὺς ἀγέληφι. II. ii. 480.

The king of kings, majestically tall,
Towers o'er his armies, and outshines them all,
Like some proud bull.

POPE.

¹⁵ *His shining shield is on his side, like a flame on the heath at night.*] And, though omitted in the first editions, “ *Dimly gleam the hills around, and shew indistinctly their oaks.*” From the shield of Achilles. POPE’S *Iliad*, xix. 402.

And, like the moon, his broad *refulgent shield*
Blazed with long rays, and *gleamed* athwart the *field*,
So to *night-wandering sailors*, pale with fears,
Wide o’er the watery waste a light appears,
Which, *on the far-seen mountain*, blazing high,
Streams from some lonely watch-tower to the sky.

And, to conceal the imitation, the light on the far-seen mountain is converted into a flame on the heath at night ; and the night-wandering sailors, pale with fears, into “ The traveller,” who “ sees some ghost sporting in the beam.”

*on shores unknown, are trembling at veering winds*¹⁶ !

“Go, Morla, go,” said the king of Lochlin, “offer peace to these ! Offer the terms we give to kings, when nations bow down to our swords. When the valiant are dead in war ; when virgins weep on the field !” Tall Morla came, the son of Swarth, and stately strode the youth along ! He spoke to Erin’s blue-eyed chief, among the lesser heroes. “Take Swaran’s peace,” the warrior spoke, “the peace he gives to kings, when nations bow to his sword. Leave Erin’s streamy plains to us, and give thy spouse and dog. Thy spouse high-bosomed¹⁷, heaving fair ! Thy dog that overtakes the wind ! Give these to prove the weakness of thine arm ; live then beneath our power !”

¹⁶ *When mariners, on shores unknown, are trembling at veering winds.*] An alteration of Milton, not inserted in the first editions. *Par. Lost.* iv. 558.

And shews the *mariner*,
From what point of his compass to *beware*
Impetuous winds.

¹⁷ Thy spouse, *high-bosomed.*] ΒΑΘΥΚΟΛΠΙΟΣ : An Homeric epithet. His spouse and dog, the conditions of peace, are taken from the Irish ballad of Magnus, who refuses to depart without Fingal’s wife and his dog Bran.

“Tell Swaran, tell that heart of pride, Cuthullin never yields. I give him the dark-rolling sea; I give his people graves in Erin¹⁸. But never shall a stranger have the pleasing sun-beam of my love. No deer shall fly on Lochlin’s hills, before swift-footed Luath.” “Vain ruler of the car,” said Morla, “wilt thou then fight the king? The king, whose ships of many groves could carry off thine isle¹⁹? So little is thy green-hilled Erin to him who rules the stormy waves!” “In words I yield to many, Morla. My sword shall yield to none²⁰. Erin shall own the sway of Cormac, while Connal and Cuthullin live! O Connal, first of mighty men, thou hearest the words of Morla. Shall thy thoughts then be of peace, thou breaker of the shields? Spirit of fallen Crugal! why didst thou threaten us

¹⁸ *I give him the dark-rolling sea; I give his people graves in Erin.*] *Highlander*, i. 97.

Norwegian firs oft brought them o’er the waves

For Albion’s crown, but *Albion gave them graves*.

¹⁹ *Whose ships—could carry off thine isle.*] From *Muirar-tach*, another Irish ballad, in which the king of Denmark threatens to carry Ireland in the corner of his ships.

²⁰ *In words I yield to many—my sword shall yield to none.*] A parody on Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, A. v. S. vii.

I have no words,

My voice is in my sword.

with death? The narrow house shall receive me, in the midst of the light of renown. Exalt, ye sons of Erin, exalt the spear and bend the bow: rush on the foe in darkness, as the spirits of stormy nights!"

Then dismal, roaring, fierce, and deep, the gloom of battle poured along; as mist that is rolled on a valley ²¹, when storms invade the silent sun-shine of heaven! Cuthullin moves before, in arms, like an angry ghost before a cloud ²²;

²¹ *The gloom of battle poured along, as mist that is rolled on a valley.*] MILTON'S *Par. Lost*, xii. 628.

On the ground

Gliding meteorous, as evening mist

Risen from a river, o'er a marish glides.

²² *Like an angry ghost before a cloud.*] Cuthullin moving before, in arms, like an angry ghost before a cloud, is exactly the Ajaces in arms, preceding a cloud of foot, like a dark cloud full of storms. *Iliad*, iv. 274.

Τὼ δὲ ΚΟΡΥΣΣ'ΕΣΘΗΝ· ἅμα δὲ ΝΕΦΟΣ ΕΙΠΕΤΟ πεζῶν.

᾽Ως δ' ὅτ' ἀπὸ σκοπιῆς εἶδεν ΝΕΦΟΣ αἰπόλος ἀνῆρ,

Ἐρχομενον κατὰ πόντον ὑπο Ζεφύροιο ἰωῆς,

Τῷ δέ τ' ἄνευθεν εἰόντι, ΜΕΛΑΝΤΕΡΟΝ, ἥύτε πίσσα,

Φαίνεται ἰὸν κατὰ πόντον, ἄγει δὲ τε ΛΑΙΛΑΠΙΑ πολλήν.

"Both the heroes moved forward, in arms: A dark storm of warriors advanced, from behind. As when from a rock's lofty brow a shepherd beholds a cloud coming forward along the main, beneath the blast of the western wind. Dark as night, it seems afar to his eyes; and, rushing over the whitening waves,

when meteors inclose him with fire ; when the dark winds are in his hand. Carril, far on the heath, bids the horn of battle sound. He raises the voice of song, and pours his soul into the minds of the brave.

“Where,” said the mouth of the song, “where is the fallen Crugal ? He lies forgot on earth ; the hall of shells is silent. Sad is the spouse of Crugal ! She is a stranger in the hall of her grief. But who is she, that, like a sun-beam, flies before the ranks of the foe ? It is Degrena, lovely fair, the spouse of fallen Crugal. Her hair is on the wind behind. Her eye is red ; her voice is shrill. Pale, empty is thy Crugal now ! His form is in the cave of the hill. He comes to the ear of rest ; he raises his feeble voice ; like the humming of the mountain-bee²³ ; like the collected flies of the eve ! But Degrena falls like a

brings a *whirlwind inclosed in its womb*.” MACPHERSON, *Homer*, i. 108. Or, to convert a *dark cloud*, with a *whirlwind in its womb*, into an angry ghost before a cloud ; “the meteors inclose him with fire, and the *dark winds* are in his hand.”

²³ *His form is in the cave of the hill : He comes to the ear of rest—like the humming of the mountain bee.*] THEOCRITUS, *Idyll*. iii. 12.

Αἶθε γενοίμαν

A BOMBETYSA MEΛISSA, καὶ ἐς τὸν ANTPON IKOIMAN.

With an intermixture from Milton, *Par. Reg.* iv. 15.

cloud of the morn²⁴; the sword of Lochlin is in her side. Cairbar, she is fallen, the rising thought of thy youth. She is fallen, O Cairbar, the thought of thy youthful hours !”

Fierce Cairbar heard the mournful sound. He rushed along like ocean's whale. He saw the death of his daughter : He roared in the midst

Or as a swarm of *flies* at vintage time,
About the wine-press, where sweet must abounds,
Beat off, returns again with *humming* sound.

“ Like the collected *flies* of evening.” (First edit.) *Supra*, *Fingal*, i. n. 41. But the passage in Theocritus was probably suggested by Warton's Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope, (i. 8.) then a recent Work. See Death of Cuthullin, p. 7.

²⁴ *Degrena falls like a cloud of the morn.*] “ For your goodness is as a *morning cloud*, and as the early dew it passeth away.” *Hosea*. vi. 4. xiii. 3.

But the *spouse* of fallen Crugal (*pale, empty* is thy Crugal now!) *flies* like a sunbeam *before the ranks* of the foe, and *falls* with the sword of Lochlin in her side ; from POPE's *Odyssey*, viii. 571.

As some fond *matron* views in mortal fight
Her *husband falling* in his country's right,
Frantic, *through clashing swords*, she runs, she *flies*,
As *ghastly pale* he groans, he faints, he dies.—
She cries, she shrieks, the fierce insulting foe
Relentless mocks her violence of woe.

The scene, which Homer describes in a simile, is here introduced as an incident actually passing in the field. As an improvement upon Homer, the matron falls amidst the clashing swords ; and all this is addressed in rhapsody to Cairbar, the father, by the mouth of songs, in the midst of the battle.

of thousands²⁵. His spear met a son of Lochlin; battle spreads from wing to wing! As a hundred winds in Lochlin's groves; as fire in the pines of a hundred hills; so loud²⁶, so ruinous, so vast the ranks of men are hewn down. Cuthullin cut off heroes like thistles; Swaran wasted Erin. Curach fell by his hand, Cairbar of the bossy shield! Morglan lies in lasting rest! Ca-olt trembles as he dies! His white breast is stained with blood; his yellow hair stretched in the dust of his native land²⁷! He

²⁵ *He roared in the midst of thousands.*] “When in the midst of thousands he roared.” *Supra*, *Fingal*, i. 48. VIRGIL'S *Æn.* i. 491.

Penthesilea furens, mediisque in millibus ardet.

²⁶ *As a hundred winds in Lochlin's groves; as fire in the pines of a hundred hills, so loud, &c.*] POPE'S *Iliad*, xiv. 157.
Less loud the winds that from the Æolian hall
 Roar through the woods, and make whole forests fall,
Less loud the woods when flames in torrents pour,
 Catch the dry mountains, and its shades devour.

²⁷ *His white breast is stained with blood; his yellow hair stretched in the dust of his native land.*] POPE'S *Homer*, *Iliad*, vi. 15.

Next, Teuthra's son *distained* the sands *with blood*;
 Axylus, *hospitable*, rich, and good;
 In fair Arisbe's walls, *his native place*;
 He held his seat, a friend to human race;
Fast by the road, his ever-open door
 Obliged the wealthy, and relieved the poor.

often had spread the feast where he fell. He often there had raised the voice of the harp : when his dogs leapt around for joy, and the youths of the chace prepared the bow !

Still Swaran advanced, as a stream, that bursts from the desert. The little hills are rolled in its course ; the rocks are half sunk by its side ²⁸ ! But Cuthullin stood before him, like a hill that catches the clouds of heaven ²⁹. The winds contend on its head of pines ; the hail rattles

As Teuthra's son *distained the sands with blood*, Ca-olt's white breast is *stained with blood* : As the hospitable Axylus dwelt at Arisbe, his *native place*, Ca-olt's yellow hair is spread in the dust of his *native land* ; and, as the friend of mankind kept open house by the road side for the reception of strangers, Ca-olt, by an improvement not unworthy of a modern, had often spread the feast on the very spot where he fell.

²⁸ *As a stream that bursts from the desert. The little hills are rolled in its course ; the rocks are half-sunk by its side.*] MILTON, *Par. Lost*, vi. 195.

As if on earth,
Winds under ground, or *waters forcing vent*,
Sidelong had pushed a *mountain* from its seat,
Half-sunk with all its *pin*es.

²⁹ *But Cuthullin stood before him like a hill that catches the clouds of heaven.*] MILTON, *Par. Lost*, iv. 985.

On the *other side*, Satan alarmed,
Collecting all his might, dilated *stood*,
Like *Teneriff* or *Atlas* unremoved ;
His stature reached the sky, and on his crest
Sat horror plumed.

on its rocks. But, firm in its strength, it stands, and shades the silent vale of Cona ! So Cuthullin shaded the sons of Erin, and stood in the midst of thousands. Blood rises like the fount of a rock, from panting heroes around. But Erin falls on either wing, like snow in the day of the sun.

“ O sons of Erin,” said Grumal, “ Lochlin conquers on the field. Why strive we as reeds against the wind ? Fly to the hill of dark-brown hinds.” He fled like the stag of Morven ; his spear is a trembling beam of light behind him. Few fled with Grumal, chief of the little soul : they fell in the battle of heroes, on Lena’s echo-

“ The winds contend on its *head of pines*, and the *hail rattles* on its *rocks*. But *firm* in its strength it stands, and shades the silent vale of Cona.” VIRGIL, *Æn.* xii. 701.

Horrendumque intonat armis :

Quantus Athos, aut quantus Eryx, aut ipse coruscis

Cum *fremet ilicibus* quantus, gaudetque *nivali*

Vertice se adtollens pater Apenninus ad *auras*.

His *head divine* obscure in *clouds* he hides,

And shakes the sounding *forest* from his sides.

DRYDEN.

“ Virgil and Milton have made use of a *comparison similar* to this (in Ossian). I shall lay both before the reader, that he may judge which of these two great poets have best succeeded.” MACPHERSON. First edit.

Such professed imitations require no comment.

ing heath. High on his car, of many gems, the chief of Erin stood. He slew a mighty son of Lochlin, and spoke, in haste, to Connal. “O Connal, first of mortal men, thou hast taught this arm of death ! Though Erin’s sons have fled, shall we not fight the foe ? Carril, son of other times, carry my friends to that bushy hill. Here, Connal, let us stand like rocks, and save our flying friends.”

Connal mounts the car of gems³⁰. They stretch their shields, like the darkened moon, the daughter of the starry skies, when she moves, a dun circle, through heaven³¹ ; *and dreadful change is expected by men*. Sithfadda panted up the

³⁰ *Connal mounts the car of light.*] First edit. Like Nestor ascending the chariot of Diomed, who retires the last before Hector and Jove. POPE’S *Iliad*, viii. 143.

Thus said the chief, and Nestor, skilled in war,
Approves the council, and *ascends* the car—
The shouts of Trojans thicken in the wind,
The storm of hissing javelins pour behind.

³¹ *Like the darkened moon, when she moves a dun circle through heaven, and dreadful change is expected by men.*] MILTON, *Par. Lost*, i. 596.

Or from behind the *moon*,
In *dim eclipse*, disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nations, and with *fear of change*
Perplexes monarchs ; *Darkened* so, yet shone, &c.

hill, and Sronnal, haughty steed ³². Like waves behind a whale behind them rushed the foe. Now, on the rising side of Cromla stood Erin's few sad sons; like a grove through which the flame had rushed ³³, hurried on by the winds of the stormy night; *distant, withered, dark they stand, with not a leaf to shake in the gale.*

But the dreadful change expected by men was suppressed in the first edition, to conceal the imitation of Milton's *dim eclipse*, "the *dun* circle of the *darkened* moon."

³² *Sithfadda panted up the hill, and Sronnal, haughty steed.*] *Supra*, ³⁰. POPE's *Iliad*, viii. 190.

He said, and hasty o'er the gasping throng
Drives the *swift steeds*. The chariot smokes along:
The shouts of Trojans thicken in the wind:
The storm of hissing javelins *pours behind*.

"Like waves *behind* a whale *behind* them rushed the foe;" and Cuthullin, with the prudent Connal, retiring in his chariot, pursued behind by Lochlin, is precisely Diomed and Nestor pursued in their chariot by the Trojans behind.

³³ *On the rising side of Cromla stood Erin's few sad sons, like a grove through which the flame has rushed, &c.*] *Distant, withered, dark they stand, &c.* as restored in the edition of 1773: From Milton: *Par. Lost*, i. 611.

Yet faithful how they *stood*;
Their glory *withered*, as when heaven's *fire*
Hath scathed the forest oaks, or mountain pines,
With singed top their stately growth, though bare,
Stands on the blasted heath.

Cuthullin stood beside an oak. He rolled his red eye in silence, and heard the wind in his bushy hair ; the scout of ocean came, Moran, the son of Fithil. "The ships," he cried, "the ships of the lonely isles. Fingal comes, the first of men, the breaker of the shields ! The waves foam before his black prows ! His masts with sails are like groves in clouds ³⁴ !" "Blow," said Cuthullin, "blow, ye winds, that rush along my isle of mist ! Come to the death of thousands, O king of resounding Selma ! Thy sails, my friend, are to me the clouds of the morning ; thy ships the light of heaven ; and thou thyself a pillar of fire, that beams on the world by night ³⁵. O Connal, first of men, how pleasing, in grief, are our friends ! But the night is gathering around ! Where now are the ships of

³⁴ *His masts, with sails, are like groves in clouds.*] Another imitation of Thomson. *Autumn*.

Like a long wintery forest, *groves of masts*
Shot up their spires, the *bellying sheet* between,
Possessed the breezy void.

³⁵ *Thyself a pillar of fire, that beams on the world by night.*] *Par. Lost*, xii. 203.

By day a *cloud*, by night a *pillar of fire*,
To guide them on their journey.

But, "Thy sails are the *clouds* of the *morning* ;" from, "His goodness is as a *morning cloud*." *Mos.* vi. 4. xiii. 3.

Fingal ? Here let us pass the hours of darkness ;
here wish for the moon of heaven."

The winds come down on the woods. The torrents rush from the rocks. Rain gathers round the head of Cromla. The red stars tremble between the flying clouds ³⁶. Sad, by the side of a stream, whose sound is echoed by a tree, sad by the side of a stream the chief of Erin sits. Connal, son of Colgar, is there, and Carril of other times. "Unhappy is the hand of Cuthullin," said the son of Semo, "unhappy is the hand of Cuthullin, since he slew his friend ! Ferda, son of Damman, I loved thee as myself !"

"How, Cuthullin, son of Semo ! how fell the breaker of the shields ? Well I remember," said Connal, "the son of the noble Damman. Tall

³⁶ *The red stars tremble between the flying clouds.*] POPE'S *Iliad*, xi. 83.

As the *red star* now shews his sanguine fires
Through the *dark clouds*, and now in night *retires*.

Or as imitated in the Highlander, i. 143.

Thus, on a night, when rattling tempests war,
Through *broken clouds* appears a *blazing star*,
Now *veils* his head, now *rushes* on the sight,
And shoots a livid horror through the night.

and fair he was, like the rain-bow of heaven."

" Ferda from Albion came, the chief of a hundred hills. In Muri's hall ³⁷ he learned the sword, and won the friendship of Cuthullin. We moved to the chace together : one was our bed in the heath !"

" Deugala was the spouse of Cairbar, chief of the plains of Ullin. She was covered with the light of beauty, but her heart was the house of pride ³⁸. She loved that sun-beam of youth, the son of noble Damman. " Cairbar," said the white-armed Deugala, " give me half of the herd. No more will I remain in your halls. Divide the herd, dark Cairbar !" " Let Cuthullin," said Cairbar, " divide my herd on the hill ³⁹. His

³⁷ An academy in Ulster for teaching the use of arms. MAC-PHERSON. First edit.

The academy of *Muri* is a fiction for which the translator was indebted to Toland, who enumerates, as one of the three greatest encouragers of learning among the heathen Irish monarchs, " King Achaius, surnamed *Eochaidh Ollamhfodla*, the doctor of Ireland, who is said to have built at Tarah, an academy, called *MUR Ollamham*, the court of the learned." *Hist. Druids*. 491.

³⁸ *She was covered with the light of beauty ; but her heart was the house of pride.*] Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment. *Psalms*, civ. 2. The Lord will destroy the house of the proud. *Prov.* xv. 25.

³⁹ *Let Cuthullin divide my herd.*] Herds of cattle are ap-

breast is the seat of justice. Depart, thou light of beauty !” I went and divided the herd. One snow-white bull remained. I gave the bull to Cairbar. The wrath of Deugala rose !”

“ Son of Damman,” begun the fair, “ Cuthullin hath pained my soul. I must hear of his death, or Lubar’s stream shall roll over me. My pale ghost shall wander near thee, and mourn the wound of my pride. Pour out the blood of Cuthullin, or pierce this heaving breast.” “ Deugala,” said the fair-haired youth, “ how shall I slay the son of Semo ? He is the friend of my secret thoughts. Shall I then lift the sword ?” She wept three days before the chief, on the fourth he said he would fight. “ I will fight my friend, Deugala ! but may I fall by his sword ! Could I wander on the hill alone ? Could I behold the grave of Cuthullin ?” We fought on the plain of Muri. Our swords avoid a wound. They slide on the helmets of steel ; or sound on the slippery shields. Deugala was near with a smile, and said to the son of Damman : “ Thine

propriated to the Irish, whom the translator renders a recent colony from the Highlands, where tame cattle were still unknown.

arm is feeble, sun-beam of youth ! Thy years are not strong for steel. Yield to the son of Semo. He is a rock on Malmor."

The tear is in the eye of youth. He faltering said to me : " Cuthullin, raise thy bossy shield. Defend thee from the hand of thy friend. My soul is laden with grief : for I must slay the chief of men !" I sighed as the wind in the cleft of a rock. I lifted high the edge of my steel. The sun-beam of battle fell : the first of Cuthullin's friends ! Unhappy is the hand of Cuthullin since the hero fell !

" Mournful is thy tale, son of the car," said Carril of other times. " It sends my soul back to the ages of old, to the days of other years. Often have I heard of Comal, who slew the friend he loved ; yet victory attended his steel : the battle was consumed in his presence !

Comal was a son of Albion ; the chief of an hundred hills ! His deer drank of a thousand streams ⁴⁰. A thousand rocks replied to the voice of his dogs. His face was the mildness

⁴⁰ *Comal,—the chief of an hundred hills. His deer drank of a thousand streams.] For every beast of the field is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. Psalms, L. 10.*

of youth. His hand the death of heroes. One was his love, and fair was she ! the daughter of mighty Conloch. She appeared like a sun-beam among women. Her hair was the wing of the raven. Her dogs were taught to the chace. Her bow-string sounded on the winds. Her soul was fixed on Comal. Often met their eyes of love. Their course in the chace was one. Happy were their words in secret. But Grumal loved the maid, the dark chief of the gloomy Ardven. He watched her lone steps in the heath; the foe of unhappy Comal !

One day, tired of the chace, when the mist had concealed their friends, Comal and the daughter of Conloch met, in the cave of Ronan. It was the wonted haunt of Comal. Its sides were hung with his arms. A hundred shields of thongs were there ; a hundred helms of sounding steel ⁴¹. “ Rest here,” he said, “ my love, Galbina : thou light of the cave of Ronan ! A deer

⁴¹ *Its sides were hung with his arms. A hundred shields of thongs were there ; a hundred helms of sounding steel.*] HIGHLANDER, iii. 199.

*Shields, spears, and helms, in beauteous order, shone,
Along the walls of uncemented stone.*

appears on Mora's brow. I go ; but I will soon return." "I fear," she said, "dark Grumal my foe : he haunts the cave of Ronan ! I will rest among the arms ; but soon return, my love !"

He went to the deer of Mora. The daughter of Conloch would try his love ⁴². She cloathed her fair sides with his armour ; she strode from the cave of Ronan ! He thought it was his foe. His heart beat high. His colour changed, and darkness dimmed his eyes. He drew the bow. The arrow flew. Galbina fell in blood ! He run with wildness in his steps : he called the daughter of Conloch. No answer in the lonely rock. "Where art thou, O my love?" He saw, at length, her heaving heart, beating around the arrow he threw. "O Conloch's daughter, is it thou?" He sunk upon her breast ! The hunters found the

⁴² *The daughter of Conloch would try his love.*] The episode is a gross imitation of the fable of Procris, slain by her husband. "He *thought it was his foe*—He *saw*, at length, her *heaving heart beating around the arrow he threw.*"

OVID. *Metam.* vii. 841.

Sum ratus esse feram, telumque volatile misi

Procris erat ; medioque tenens in pectore vulnus.

These episodes are introduced without the least connexion with the preceding, or subsequent part of the poem.

hapless pair ; he afterwards walked the hill. But many and silent were his steps round the dark dwelling of his love. The fleet of the ocean came. He fought, the strangers fled. He searched for death along the field. But who could slay the mighty Comal ! He threw away his dark-brown shield. An arrow found his manly breast. He sleeps with his loved Galbina, at the noise of the sounding surge ! Their green tombs are seen by the mariner, when he bounds on the waves of the north ⁴³.

⁴³ *He sleeps—at the noise of the sounding surge. Their green tombs are seen by the mariner when he bounds on the waves of the north.] POPE'S Iliad, vii. 98.*

Greece on the shore shall raise a monument,
Which, when some future mariner surveys,
Washed by broad Hellespont's resounding seas,
Thus shall he say.

“ Homer took the hint of this from several *tombs* of the ancient heroes who had fought at Troy, remaining in his time upon the shores of the Hellespont.” POPE'S *Notes*, ib. In these passages, the imitation is obvious ; but, by what name was the mariner distinguished in the Earse language, when all were hunters, and before the separation of professions had taken place ?

FINGAL,
AN
EPIC POEM;
BOOK III.

ARGUMENT TO BOOK III.

Cuthullin, pleased with the story of Carril, insists with that bard for more of his songs. He relates the actions of Fingal in Lochlin, and death of Agandecca, the beautiful sister of Swaran. He had scarce finished, when Calmar, the son of Matha, who had advised the first battle, came wounded from the field, and told them of Swaran's design to surprise the remains of the Irish army. He himself proposes to withstand singly the whole force of the enemy, in a narrow pass, till the Irish should make good their retreat. Cuthullin, touched with the gallant proposal of Calmar, resolves to accompany him, and orders Carril to carry off the few that remained of the Irish. Morning comes, Calmar dies of his wounds; and, the ships of the Caledonians appearing, Swaran gives over the pursuit of the Irish, and returns to oppose Fingal's landing. Cuthullin ashamed, after his defeat, to appear before Fingal, retires to the cave of Tura. Fingal engages the enemy, puts them to flight; but the coming on of night makes the victory not decisive. The king, who had observed the gallant behaviour of his grandson Oscar, gives him advices concerning his conduct in peace and war. He recommends to him to place the example of his fathers before his eyes, as the best model for his conduct; which introduces the episode concerning Fainasollis, the daughter of the king of Craca, whom Fingal had taken under his protection, in his youth. Fillan and Oscar are dispatched to observe the motions of the enemy by night; Gaul, the son of Morni, desires the command of the army, in the next battle; which Fingal promises to give him. Some general reflections of the poet close the third day.

MACPHERSON.

FINGAL.

BOOK III.

“PLEASANT are the words of the song,” said Cuthullin ! “lovely the tales of other times ! They are like the calm dew of the morning¹ on the hill of roes, when the sun is faint on its side, and the lake is settled and blue in the vale. O Carril, raise again thy voice ; let me hear the song of Selma : which was sung in my halls of joy, when Fingal, king of shields, was there, and glowed at the deeds of his fathers.”

¹ —*like the calm dew of the morning.*] The tales of other times are compared, in a former simile, to the calm shower of spring ; and in the present to the calm dew of the morning ; from the same text : “ My doctrine shall drop as the rain : my speech shall distil as the *dew* : as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass.” *Deut.* xxxii. 2. But the additional images are beautifully descriptive.

“Fingal ! thou dweller of battle,” said Carril, “early were thy deeds in arms. Lochlin was consumed in thy wrath, when thy youth strove with the beauty of maids. They smiled at the fair-blooming face of the hero ; but death was in his hands. He was strong as the waters of Lora. His followers were the roar of a thousand streams. They took the king of Lochlin in war ; they restored him to his ships. His big heart swelled with pride ; the death of the youth was dark in his soul. For none ever, but Fingal, had overcome the strength of the mighty Starno. He sat in the hall of his shells in Lochlin’s woody land. He called the grey-haired Snivan, that often sung round the circle of Loda : when the stone of power heard his voice, and battle turned in the field of the valiant !

“Go, grey-haired Snivan,” Starno said, “go to Ardven’s sea-surrounded rocks. Tell to the king of Selma ; he, the fairest among his thousands, tell him I give him my daughter, the loveliest maid that ever heaved a breast of snow. Her arms are white as the foam of my waves. Her soul is generous and mild. Let him come with his bravest heroes to the daughter of the secret hall !” Snivan came to Selma’s hall : Fair-

haired Fingal attended his steps. His kindled soul flew to the maid, as he bounded on the waves of the north. "Welcome," said the dark-brown Starnò, "Welcome, king of rocky Morven : Welcome his heroes of might ; sons of the distant isle ! Three days within my halls shall ye feast ; three days pursue my boars ; that your fame may reach the maid who dwells in the secret hall."

Starno designed their death ². He gave the feast of shells. Fingal, who doubted the foe, kept on his arms of steel. The sons of death were afraid : They fled from the eyes of the king. The voice of sprightly mirth arose. The trembling harps of joy were strung. Bards sung the battle of heroes : They sung the heaving

² Starno *designed their death*.] The *king of snow* designed their death. First edit. Starno is here poetically called the *king of snow*, from the great quantity of snow that falls in his dominions. MACPHERSON, *ib*.

Macpherson, when in search of poetical images for his *Ossian*, found the expression in Shakespeare's *Richard II.* A. iv. S. 1.

O that I were a mockery *king of snow*.
Or perhaps in Harte's *Life of Gustavus*, published in 1759.
"The rhodomentade at Vienna was, that he was a *king of snow*, and would melt to pieces as he advanced farther south." i. 68.
8vo. edit.

breast of love. Ullin, Fingal's bard, was there : the sweet voice of resounding Cona. He praised the daughter of Lochlin ; and Morven's ³ high-descended chief. The daughter of Lochlin overheard. She left the hall of her secret sigh ! She came in all her beauty, like the moon from the cloud of the east ⁴. Loveliness was around her as light. Her steps were the music of songs ⁵. She saw the youth, and loved him. He was the stolen sigh of her soul. Her blue eye rolled on

³ All the North-west coast of Scotland probably went of old under the name of Morven, which signifies a ridge of very high hills. MACPHERSON.

In the first edition, instead of the daughter of *Lochlin*, " He praised the *daughter of the snow*—the *daughter of the snow* overheard:" " An exuberance in imagery restrained with advantage by a degree of judgment acquired in the progress of time." Pref. to edit. 1773.

⁴ *She came in all her beauty, like the moon from the cloud of the east.*] From THOMSON'S *Autumn*, *infra*, ³⁴.

Meanwhile the moon,

Full orb'd, and *breaking from* the scattered clouds,

Shews her broad visage in the crimsoned east.

and MILTON, *Par. Lost*, iv. 606.

Till the moon,

Rising in *clouded majesty* at length,

Apparent queen, unvail'd her *peerless light*.

⁵ *She came in all her beauty*—Loveliness was around her as light. Her steps were the music of songs.] *Par. Lost*, viii. 489.

him in secret : she blest the chief of resounding Morven.

The third day, with all its beams, shone bright on the wood of boars. Forth moved the dark-browed Starno ; and Fingal, king of shields. Half the day they spent in the chace ; the spear of Selma was red in blood. It was then the daughter of Starno, with blue eyes rolling in tears ; it was then she came with her voice of love, and spoke to the king of Morven “ Fingal, high-descended chief, trust not Starno’s heart of pride. Within that wood he has placed his chiefs. Beware of the wood of death. But, remember, son of the isle, remember Agandecca : save me from the wrath of my father, king of the windy Morven !”

The youth, with unconcern, went on ; his he-

*Grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eye,
In every gesture dignity and love.*

Macpherson had not then discovered Milton’s original, in *Tibullus*, iv. 2.

*Illam quicquid agit, quoquo vestigia movit,
Composit fartim subsequiturque decus.*

but he availed himself afterwards of Tibullus, from the following hint. “ Take, for an example of grace and delicacy, the elegant description of Agandecca, wherein the tenderness of Tibullus seems united with the majesty of Virgil.” BLAIR.

roes by his side. The sons of death fell by his hand ; and Gormal echoed around ! Before the halls of Starno the sons of the chace convened. The king's dark brows were like clouds. His eyes like meteors of night ⁶. “ Bring hither,” he said, “ Agandecca to her lovely king of Morven ! His hand is stained with the blood of my people ; her words have not been in vain !” She came with the red eye of tears. She came with loosely flowing locks. Her white breast heaved with broken sighs, like the foam of the streamy

⁶ *The king's dark brows were like clouds : his eyes like meteors of night.*] CONGREVE, *Mourning Bride*.

Ha ! 'twas the king !

The king that parted thence ! *frowning* he went,
His *eyes* like *meteors* rolled.

YOUNG'S *Night Thoughts*.

Like *meteors* in a stormy sky, now rolled
His baleful *eyes*.

In such imitations as these, the precise passage was not always consulted. Ideas of memory are frequently not to be distinguished from those of imagination ; and, undoubtedly, Macpherson, upon some occasions, was unconscious of the very imitation which he practised. His mind, impregnated with images from the scriptures, the classics, and from English poetry, had nothing else to produce as original ; and it is sufficient for our purpose to trace them to their source. Thus, in Homer, and in the scriptures, the eyes are compared to a flame of fire, but never to meteors ; a simile peculiar to modern poetry.

Lubar. Starno pierced her side with steel. She fell, like a wreath of snow, which slides from the rocks of Ronan ; when the woods are still, and echo deepens in the vale ! Then Fingal eyed his valiant chiefs, his valiant chiefs took arms. The gloom of battle roared ; Lochlin fled or died. Pale, in his bounding ship he closed the maid of the softest soul. Her tomb ascends on Ardden ; the sea roars round her narrow dwelling.

“ Blessed be her soul ;” said Cuthullin, “ blessed be the mouth of the song ! Strong was the youth of Fingal ; strong is his arm of age. Lochlin shall fall again before the king of echoing Morven. Shew thy face from a cloud, O moon ; light his white sails on the wave : And if any strong spirit ⁷ of heaven sits on that low-

⁷ This is the only passage in the poem that has the appearance of religion. But Cuthullin’s apostrophe to this spirit is accompanied with a doubt, so that it is not easy to determine whether the hero meant a superior being, or the ghosts of deceased warriors, who were supposed in those times to rule the storms, and to transport themselves in a gust of wind from one country to another. MACPHERSON.

In Macpherson’s *Hunter*, the king of Fairie’s daughter *transports herself thus from one country to another*.

She spoke ; the eddying whirlwind sweeps the skies,
Borne on a blast the fleeting Flavia flies ;
Clods, dust, and straws, in one confusion fly,
And trembling atoms mingle with the sky.

hung cloud ; turn his dark ships from the rock,
thou rider of the storm !”

Such were the words of Cuthullin at the sound of the mountain-stream, when Calmar ascended the hill, the wounded son of Matha. From the field he came in his blood ⁸. He leaned on his bending spear. Feeble is the arm of battle ! but strong the soul of the hero ! “ Welcome ! O son of Matha,” said Connal, “ welcome art thou to thy friends ! Why bursts that broken sigh, from the breast of him who never feared before ?” “ And never, Connal, will he fear, chief of the pointed steel ! My soul brightens in danger : in the noise of arms. I am of the race of battle. My fathers never feared.

“ Cormar was the first of my race. He sported through the storms of waves. His black skiff bounded on ocean ; he travelled on the wings of the wind ⁹. A spirit once embroiled the night. Seas swell, and rocks resound. Winds drive along the clouds. The lightning flies on wings

⁸ *From the field he came in his blood.*] *Highlander*, iii. 136. ; where a soldier returns, like Calmar, wounded from the field.

⁹ *He travelled on the wings of the wind.*] *Travelling* in the greatness of his strength. *Isaiah*, lxii. 4. Yea, he did fly on the wings of the wind. *Psalms*, xviii. 10.

of fire. He feared and came to land : then blushed that he feared at all. He rushed again among the waves to find the son of the wind. Three youths guide the bounding bark ; he stood with sword unsheathed. When the low-hung vapour passed, he took it by the curling head¹⁰. He searched its dark womb with his steel. The son of the wind forsook the air. The moon and stars returned ! Such was the boldness of my race. Calmar is like his fathers. Danger flies from the lifted sword. They best succeed who dare !

“ But now, ye sons of green Erin, retire from Lena’s bloody heath. Collect the sad remnant of our friends, and join the sword of Fingal. I heard the sound of Lochlin’s advancing arms ! Calmar will remain and fight. My voice shall be such, my friends, as if thousands were behind

¹⁰ *When the low-hung vapour passed, he took it by the curling head.*] SHAKESPEARE, 2 *Henry IV.* act iii. sc. i.

And in the *visitation* of the winds,

Who *take* the ruffian billows by the top,

Curling their monstrous heads.

In this strange imitation of Henry IV’s soliloquy on sleep, the ship-boy rocked “ in cradle of the rude imperious surge,” is converted into Cormar sporting, in his black skiff, through the storms of the waves, and “ the visitation of the winds,” into the vapour that passed with the son of the wind. *Infra*, n. 15.

me. But, son of Semo, remember me. Remember Calmar's lifeless corse. When Fingal shall have wasted the field, place me by some stone of remembrance, that future times may hear my fame; that the mother of Calmar may rejoice in my renown."

"No: son of Matha," said Cuthullin, "I will never leave thee here. My joy is in unequal fight: my soul increases in danger. Connal, and Carril of other times, carry off the sad sons of Erin. When the battle is over, search for us in this narrow way. For near this oak we shall fall, in the stream of the battle of thousands!" "O Fithil's son, with flying speed rush over the heath of Lena. Tell to Fingal that Erin is fallen. Bid the king of Morven come. O let him come, like the sun in a storm, to lighten, to restore the isle¹¹!"

Morning is grey on Cromla. The sons of the sea ascend. Calmar stood forth to meet them in the pride of his kindling soul. But pale was the face of the chief. He leaned on his father's spear. That spear which he brought from Lara,

¹¹ *O let him come, like the sun in a storm, to lighten, to restore our isle.*] SHAKSPEARE, *Troilus and Cressida*, act i. sc. i.

As when the sun doth light a storm.

when the soul of his mother was sad ; the soul of the lonely Alcletha, waining in the sorrow of years. But slowly now the hero falls, like a tree on the plain. Dark Cuthullin stands alone, like a rock in a sandy vale ¹². The sea comes with its waves, and roars on its hardened sides. Its head is covered with foam ; the hills are echoing around.

Now from the grey mist of the ocean, the white-sailed ships of Fingal appear. High is the grove of their masts ¹³, as they nod, by turns, on

¹² *Dark Cuthullin stands alone, like a rock in a sandy vale.*] *Æn.* vii. 586.

Ille, velut pelagi rupes immota, resistit :
 Ut pelagi rupes, magno veniente fragore,
 Quæ sese, multis circum latrantibus undis,
 Mole tenet : scopuli nequicquam et spumea circum
 Saxa fremunt, laterique illisa refunditur alga.

“ The sea comes with its waves, and roars in its hardened sides. Its head is covered with foam : The hills are echoing around.” *Iliad*, xv. 610.

—— ἡύτε ΠΕΤΡΗ

ΗΛΙΘΑΤΟΣ, ΜΕΓΑΛΗ, ΠΟΛΙΗΣ ΑΛΟΣ ΕΓΓΥΣ ΕΟΥΣΑ.

ΗΤΕ ΜΕΝΕΙ ΛΙΓΕΩΝ ΑΝΕΜΩΝ ΛΑΙΨΗΓΑ ΚΕΛΕΥΘΑ,

ΚΥΜΑΤΑ ΤΕ ΤΡΟΦΟΕΝΤΑ ΤΑ ΠΡΟΣΕΡΕΤΤΕΤΑΙ ΑΥΤΗΝ*

Quoted as a parallel passage in the first edition, to conceal the more immediate imitation of Virgil.

¹³ High is the grove of their masts.] Another repetition of Thomson’s “ Groves of masts shot up their spires.”

the rolling wave. Swaran saw them from the hill. He returned from the sons of Erin. As ebbs the resounding sea, through the hundred isles of Inistore ; so loud, so vast, so immense returned the sons of Lochlin ¹⁴ against the king. But bending, weeping, sad, and slow, and dragging his long spear behind, Cuthullin sunk in Cromla's wood, and mourned his fallen friends. He feared the face of Fingal, who was wont to greet him from the fields of renown !

“ How many lie there of my heroes ! the chiefs of Erin's race ! they that were chearful in the hall, when the sound of the shells arose ! No more shall I find their steps in the heath. No more shall I hear their voice in the chace. Pale,

¹⁴ As ebbs the resounding sea, through the hundred isles of Inistore ; so loud—returned the sons of Lochlin.] *Par. Lost*, vii. 295.

As armies at the call
Of trumpet (for of armies thou hast heard)
Troop to their standard, so the watery throng,
Wave rolling after wave, where way they found,
If steep, with torrent rapture, if through plain,
Soft ebbing.

THOMSON's *Autumn*.

Or where the northern ocean, in vast whirls,
Boils round the naked melancholy isles
Of farthest Thule.

silent, low on bloody beds, are they who were my friends ! O spirits of the lately dead ¹⁵, meet Cuthullin on his heath. Speak to him on the wind, when the rustling tree of Tura's cave re-sounds. There, far remote, I shall lie unknown. No bard shall hear of me. No grey stone shall rise to my renown. Mourn me with the dead, O Bragela ! departed is my fame." Such were the words of Cuthullin, when he sunk in the woods of Cromla !

Fingal, tall in his ship, stretched his bright lance before him ¹⁶. Terrible was the gleam of the steel : it was like the green meteor of death, setting in the heath of Malmor, when the tra-

¹⁵ How many *lie there* of my heroes—*Pale, silent, low, on bloody beds.*—*O spirits of the lately dead.*] Another imitation of the soliloquy on sleep. *Supra*, n. ¹⁰. SHAKESPEARE, ii. *Henry IV.* A. iii. S. i.

*How many thousands of my poorest subjects
Are at this hour asleep ! O gentle sleep !—
O thou dull god, why liest thou with the vile
In loathsome beds.*

¹⁶ *Fingal, tall in his ship, stretched his bright lance before him.*] *Æn.* x. 261.

*Stans celsa in puppi : clypeum cum deinde sinistra
Extulit ardentem.*

"Terrible was the gleam of his steel : it was like the green meteor of death, setting on the heath of Malmor, when the traveller is alone, and the broad moon is darkened in heaven." *Id.*

veller is alone, and the broad moon is darkened in heaven.

“The battle is past,” said the king. “I behold the blood of my friends. Sad is the heath of Lena ! mournful the oaks of Cromla. The hunters have fallen in their strength : the son of Semo is no more. Ryno and Fillan, my sons, sound the horn of Fingal. Ascend that hill on the shore ; call the children of the foe. Call them from the grave of Lamdarg, the chief of other times. Be your voice like that of your father, when he enters the battles of his strength.

Ardet apex capiti, cristisque a vertice flamma
Funditur, et *vastos umbo* vomit aureus *ignes* :
Non secus, ac liquida si quando *nocte cometa*
Sanguinei lugubre rubent, aut *Sirius ardor* :
Ille sitim *morbosque* ferens mortalibus ægris
Nascitur, et lævo *contristat lumine cælum*.

Without perceiving that Fingal, tall in his ship, &c. is precisely Æneas, “*Stans celsa in puppi*, &c.” Blair observes, that “Homer’s comparison of Achilles to the dog-star is very sublime ; the first appearance of Fingal is, in like manner, compared by Ossian to a star or meteor ; the hero in Homer is more magnificent ; in Ossian more terrible.”

Homer does indeed compare the flaming mail of Achilles to the noxious dog-star, and the point of his *spear* to the evening star ; but, according to this impartial division of poetical excellence, Homer, perhaps, is more various and magnificent, but Ossian is far more pathetic and sublime.

I wait for the mighty stranger. I wait on Lena's shore for Swaran. Let him come with his race ; strong in battle are the friends of the dead !”

Fair Ryno as lightning gleamed along : Dark Fillan rushed like the shade of autumn. On Lena's heath their voice is heard. The sons of ocean heard the horn of Fingal. As the roaring eddy of ocean returning from the kingdom of snows¹⁷ ; so strong, so dark, so sudden came down the sons of Lochlin. The king in their front appears, in the dismal pride of his arms ! Wrath burns on his dark-brown face : his eyes roll in the fire of his valour. Fingal beheld the son of Starno : he remembered Agandecca. For Swaran with the tears of youth had mourned his white-bosomed sister. He sent Ullin of songs to bid him to the feast of shells : For pleasant on Fingal's soul returned the memory of the first of his loves !

¹⁷ *As the roaring eddy of ocean returning from the kingdom of snows.] Supra, n. 14. THOMSON'S Autumn.*

Or where the Northern ocean, in vast whirls,
Boils round the naked melancholy isles
Of farthest Thule, and th' Atlantic's surge
Pours in among the stormy Hebrides,

Ullin came with aged steps, and spoke to Starno's son. "O thou that dwellest afar, surrounded, like a rock, with thy waves¹⁸! come to the feast of the king, and pass the day in rest. To-morrow let us fight, O Swaran, and break the echoing shields." "To-day," said Starno's wrathful son, "we break the echoing shields: to-morrow my feast shall be spread; but Fingal shall lie on earth." "To-morrow let his feast be spread," said Fingal with a smile. "To-day, O my sons, we shall break the echoing shields. Ossian, stand thou near my arm. Gaul, lift thy terrible sword. Fergus, bend thy crooked yew. Throw, Fillan, thy lance through heaven¹⁹. Lift your shields, like the darkened moon. Be your spears the meteors of death. Follow me in the path of my fame. Equal my deeds in battle."

As a hundred winds on Morven; as the streams

¹⁸ O thou that dwellest *afar*, surrounded like a rock with thy waves.] O thou that dwellest upon many waters. *Jeremiah*, i. 13.

¹⁹ *Fergus*, bend thy crooked yew. *Throw*, *Fillan*, thy lance through heaven.] HARDYKNUTE.

Robin of Rothesay, bend thy bow,

Thy arrows shoot sa leil—

Braed Thomas, take ye but your lance,

Ye need no weapons mair.

of a hundred hills ; as clouds fly successive over heaven ; as the dark ocean assails the shore of the desert : so roaring²⁰, so vast, so terrible the armies mixed on Lena's echoing heath. The groan of the people spread over the hills : it was like the thunder of night, when the cloud bursts on Cona²¹, and a thousand ghosts shriek at once

²⁰ *As a hundred winds on Morven ; as the streams of a hundred hills—as the dark ocean assails the shore, so roaring, &c.]* A former simile repeated from Homer. *Supra*, ii. n. ²⁶. POPE'S *Iliad*, xiv. 137.

Not half so loud the *bellowing deeps* resound,
When *stormy winds* disclose the *dark profound* ;
Less loud the *winds*, that, from the *Æolian hall*,
Roar through the woods, and make whole forests fall ;
Less loud the woods, when *flames* in torrents pour,
Catch the dry *mountain*, and its shades devour.

To conceal the repetition, the waves of ocean are omitted in the former simile, and the flames of the grove in the present ; and the *pin*es are converted into the *streams* of a hundred hills.

²¹ *Like the thunder of night, when the cloud bursts on Cona.]* POPE'S *Iliad*, viii. 93.

Then Jove, from Ida's top, his horrors spreads,
The *clouds burst* dreadful o'er the Grecian heads ;
Thick lightnings flash, the muttering *thunder* rolls,
Their strength he withers, and unmans their souls.

"And a *thousand ghosts shriek* at once in the hollow wind."
Par. Lost, iv. 422.

Infernal *ghosts* and hellish furies round
Environed thee, some howled, some yelled, some *shrieked*,
Some bent at thee their fiery darts.

on the hollow wind. Fingal rushed on in his strength, terrible as the spirit of Trenmor; when, in a whirlwind, he comes to Morven²², to see the children of his pride. The oaks resound on their mountains, and the rocks fall down before him. *Dimly seen, as lightens the night, he strides largely from hill to hill.* Bloody was the hand of my father, when he whirled the gleam of his sword. He remembers the battles of his youth. The field is wasted in the course!

Ryno went on like a pillar of fire. Dark is the brow of Gaul. Fergus rushed forward with

²² *Terrible as the spirit of Trenmor; when, in a whirlwind, he comes to Morven.*] ADDISON'S Campaign.

So when an angel, by divine command,
With rising tempests shakes a guilty land;
(Such as of late o'er pale Britannia past;)
Calm and serene he drives the furious blast;
And pleased the Almighty's orders to perform,
Rides in the whirlwind and directs the storm.

The simile of the angel in Addison's *Campaign* was derived in 1704, from a recent event; the great storm on the 26th of November 1703, for which a national fast was appointed. The concluding line apparently contains the very text of the day, that suggested to Addison the simile which Johnson depreciates so much. Macpherson's knowledge of scripture directed him to the text; "The Lord hath his way in the *whirlwind* and in the *storm*;" (Nahum, i. 3.) and the additional images in Ossian were supplied by the context: "The oaks resound on their

feet of wind ²³. Fillan, like the mist of the hill. Ossian, like a rock, came down. I exulted in the strength of the king. Many were the deaths of my arm ! dismal the gleam of my sword ! My locks were not then so grey ; nor trembled my hands with age. My eyes were not closed in darkness ; my feet failed not in the race ²⁴ !

Who can relate the deaths of the people ?
Who the deeds of mighty heroes ? when Fingal,
burning in his wrath, consumed the sons of
Lochlin ? groans swelled on groans from hill to

mountains, and the rocks fall down before him," from "The mountains quake at him, the hills melt.—The rocks are *thrown down* by him." *Id.* 5. 6. But, "Dimly seen, as lightens the night," (To us *invisible*, or *dimly seen*) "he strides largely from hill to hill," as restored, or inserted, in the latter editions, is the popular belief in the Highlands concerning the Fions ; that they were a race of giants who strode from hill to hill.

²³ *Fergus—with feet of wind.*] HARDYKNUTE.

Malcolm, *light of foot*, as stag

That runs in forest wild.

²⁴ *My feet failed not in the race.*] POPE'S *Odyssey*, viii. 263.

Sole in the *race*, the contest I decline ;

Stiff are my weary joints, and I resign.

By storms and hunger worn, *age* well may *fail*,

When storms and hunger both at once assail.

A complaint strictly appropriated to the middle age, and to the situation of Ulysses at the public games. But, in Ossian, the complaint that his feet failed in the race, when his *eyes* were already *closed in darkness*, ("Closed his eyes in endless night," GRAY), could proceed from nothing but imitation.

hill, till night had covered all. Pale, staring like a herd of deer, the sons of Lochlin convene on Lena. We sat and heard the sprightly harp, at Lubar's gentle stream ²⁵. Fingal himself was next to the foes. He listened to the tales of his bards. His godlike race were in the song, the chiefs of other times. Attentive, leaning on his shield, the king of Morven sat. The wind whistled through his locks ; his thoughts are of the days of other years. Near him on his bending spear, my young, my valiant Oscar stood. He admired the king of Morven : his deeds were swelling in his soul !

“ Son of my son,” begun the king, “ O Oscar, pride of youth ! I saw the shining of thy sword. I gloried in my race. Pursue the fame of our fathers ; be thou what they have been, when Trenmor lived, the first of men, and Tra-thal, the father of heroes ! They fought the battle in their youth. They are the song of bards. O

²⁵ We sat and heard *the sprightly harp, at Lubar's gentle stream.*] From the Scotch version of the 137th Psalm.

By *Babel's stream we sat and wept,*

When Zion we thought on,

In midst thereof we hanged our *harps,*

The willow trees upon.

Oscar ! bend the strong in arm : but spare the feeble hand. Be thou a stream of many tides against the foes of thy people ; but like the gale, that moves the grass, to those who ask thine aid. So Trenmor lived ; such Trathal was ; and such has Fingal been. My arm was the support of the injured ; the weak rested behind the lightning of my steel.

“ Oscar ! I was young like thee, when lovely Fainasóllis came : that sun-beam ! that mild light of love ! the daughter of Craca’s ²⁷ king !

²⁶ *O Oscar ! bend the strong in arms ; but spare the feeble hand.*] *Æn.* vi. 853.

Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento,
(Hæ tibi erunt artes) pacisque imponere morem,
Parcere subjectis, et debellare superbos.

“ Be thou a stream of many tides against the foes of thy people, but *the gale that moves the grass* to those who ask thine aid.” An alteration of Shakespeare’s character of Guiderius and Arviragus, as will afterwards appear: *Infra*, vi. 9. *Cymbeline*, v. 2.

They are as-gentle
As *zephyrs, blowing below the violet*,
Not wagging his sweet head : and yet as rough,
Their royal blood enchafed, as the rud’st wind,
That by the top doth take the mountain pine,
And make him stoop to the vale.

²⁷ What the Craca here mentioned was, is not, at this distance of time, easy to determine. The most probable opi-

I then returned to Cona's heath, and few were in my train. A white-sailed boat appeared far off; we saw it like a mist, that rode on ocean's wind. It soon approached. We saw the fair. Her white breast heaved with sighs. The wind

nion is, that it was one of the Shetland isles. There is a story concerning a daughter of the king of Craca in the sixth book. MACPHERSON.

This most probable opinion, that *Craca* was one of the Shetland isles, is a sufficient indication, that it was formed from Buchanan's *Cracoviaca*, the Danish name of Kirkwall, (*Kirkiuviog*) latinized. The episode itself is an alteration of the sixth Fragment, which is taken from the Irish ballad of *Dan na h Inghin*, or the *Maid's Tragedy*, as it is styled by some. A damsel flying into Ireland, to implore Fingal's protection, is pursued thither by Iullan, the king of Spain's son, or *Moir a Borb*, the *Barbarous Moor*, king of Sorch a, or Portugal, according to Miss Brooks's edition and translation of the ballad. Having bound Fingal's four youngest sons, he slew the maid with an arrow, and after destroying one half of the Fions, he was at length encountered and killed by Oscar. The Fragment adheres to the names and the dialogue form of the ballad, from which it deviates only in rendering the maid the daughter of Cremor, prince of Inverne. But the form, the names, and the whole story, are altered in Fingal. The dialogue between Ossian and St Patrick, or Macalpine the clerk, is suppressed: the nameless maid of Inverness, is converted into Fainasollis, the king of Craca's daughter, and Ullin, her pursuer in the Fragments, into *Borbar*, the *barbarous* king of Sora, who is killed by Fingal, that the latter may recite the episode with propriety to Oscar. The *Maid's Tragedy*, the only original ever discovered in the Highlands, is the foundation of the whole.

was in her loose dark hair : her rosy cheek had tears. “ Daughter of beauty,” calm I said, “ what sigh is in thy breast ? Can I, young as I am, defend thee, daughter of the sea ? My sword is not unmatched in war, but dauntless is my heart.”

“ To thee I fly,” with sighs she said, “ O prince of mighty men ! To thee I fly, chief of the generous shells, supporter of the feeble hand ! The king of Craca’s echoing isle owned me the sun-beam of his race. Cromla’s hills have heard the sighs of love for unhappy Fainasóllis ! Sora’s chief beheld me fair ; he loved the daughter of Craca. His sword is a beam of light upon the warrior’s side. But dark is his brow ; and tempests are in his soul. I shun him, on the roaring sea ; but Sora’s chief pursues.”

“ Rest thou,” I said, “ behind my shield ; rest in peace, thou beam of light ! the gloomy chief of Sora will fly, if Fingal’s arm is like his soul. In some lone cave I might conceal thee, daughter of the sea ! but Fingal never flies. Where the danger threatens, I rejoice in the storm of spears.” I saw the tears upon her cheek. I pitied Craca’s fair. Now, like a

dreadful wave afar, appeared the ship of stormy Borbar. His masts high-bended over the sea, behind their sheets of snow²⁸. White roll the waters on either side. The strength of ocean sounds. "Come thou," I said, "from the roar of ocean, thou rider of the storm ! Partake the feast within my hall. It is the house of strangers."

"The maid stood trembling by my side. He drew the bow. She fell. "Unerring is thy hand," I said, "but feeble was the foe!" We fought, nor weak the strife of death ! He sunk beneath my sword. We laid them in two tombs of stone ; the hapless lovers of youth ! Such have I been in my youth, O Oscar ; be thou like the age of Fingal. Never search thou for battle, nor shun it when it comes.

²⁸ *His masts high bended over the sea behind their sheets of snow.*] The bellying sheet between. THOMSON. And MACPHERSON's early poem, entitled *Death*.

Now, on the bosom of the sounding main,
Two fleets, with brazen prows, white billows plow,
The bending mast low struggles with the wind,
And quivering billows lash the oaken sides---
Old ocean trembles.

"White roll the waters on either side. The strength of ocean sounds."

“ Fillan and Oscar of the dark-brown hair !
ye, that are swift in the race ! fly over the heath
in my presence. View the sons of Lochlin.
Far off I hear the noise of their fear, like distant
sounds in woods. Go : that they may not fly
from my sword, along the waves of the north.
For many chiefs of Erin’s race, lie here on the
dark bed of death. The children of war are
low ; the sons of echoing Cromla.”

The heroes flew like two dark clouds : two
dark clouds that are the chariots of ghosts ²⁹ ;
when air’s dark children come forth to frighten
hapless men. It was then that Gaul ³⁰, the son

²⁹ *Two dark clouds that are the chariots of ghosts.*] MIL-
TON, *Par. Lost*, ii. 729.

Thence many a league,
As in a *cloudy chair* ascending, rides
Audacious.

³⁰ Gaul, the son of Morni, was the chief of a tribe, that dis-
puted long the pre-eminence with Fingal himself. They were
reduced at last to obedience, and Gaul, from an enemy, turned
Fingal’s best friend and greatest hero. His character is some-
thing like that of Ajax in the *Iliad* ; a hero of more strength
than conduct in battle. He was very fond of military fame,
and here he demands the next battle to himself. The poet, by
an artifice, removes Fingal, that his return may be the more
magnificent. MACPHERSON.

The removal of Achilles, and his return to the field, consti-
VOL. I.

of Morni, stood like a rock in night. His spear is glittering to the stars³¹; his voice like many streams.

“Son of battle,” cried the chief, “O Fingal, king of shells! let the bards of many songs sooth Erin’s friends to rest. Fingal, sheath thou thy sword of death; and let thy people fight. We wither away without our fame; our king is the only breaker of shields! When morning rises on our hills, behold, at a distance, our deeds. Let Lochlin feel the sword of Morni’s son; that bards may sing of me. Such was the custom heretofore of Fingal’s noble race. Such was thine own, thou king of swords, in battles of the spear.”

“O son of Morni,” Fingal replied, “I glory in thy fame. Fight; but my spear shall be near,

tute the principal subject of the *Iliad*. The removal of Æneas is effected by a voyage undertaken to procure auxiliaries. But the clumsy artifice employed to remove Fingal, that his return to the field may be the more magnificent, renders the epic art of the translator only the more apparent. The simplicity of Blair’s dissertation on the subject, is most amusing and ridiculous. *Infra*, iv. 23.

³¹ *His spear is glittering to the stars.*] *Highlander*, 1. 187.

The ponderous *spear* supports his dusky way,
The waving steel reflects the *stellar ray*.

to aid thee in the midst of danger. Raise, raise the voice, ye sons of song, and lull me into rest. Here will Fingal lie, amidst the wind of night. And if thou, Agandecca, art near, among the children of thy land; if thou sittest on a blast of wind, among the high-shrouded masts of Lochlin; come to my dreams, my fair one. Shew thy bright face to my soul ³²."

Many a voice and many a harp, in tuneful sounds arose. Of Fingal's noble deeds they sung; of Fingal's noble race: And sometimes, on the lovely sound, was heard the name of Ossian. I often fought, and often won, in battles of the spear. But blind, and tearful, and forlorn I walk with little men! O Fingal, with thy race of war I now behold thee not! The wild roes feed on the green tomb of the mighty king of Morven ³³! Blest be thy soul, thou king of

³² Shew *thy* bright face to my soul.] "Like the moon from the cloud of the east." *Supra*, iii. 4. Both from THOMSON'S *Autumn*.

Meanwhile the moon

Full orb'd, and breaking from the scattered clouds,
Shews her broad visage in the crimsoned east.

³³ The wild roes feed on the green tomb of the mighty king of Morven.] HORACE, *Ode* iii. 40.

swords, thou most renowned on the hills of
Cona !

Dum Priami Paridisque busto,

Insultet *armentum*.

But the imitation is more immediately derived from YOUNG'S
Night Thoughts, Night iii.

Senseless as *herds* that *graze* the hallowed *graves*.

FINGAL,

AN

EPIC POEM;

BOOK IV.

ARGUMENT TO BOOK IV.

The action of the poem being suspended by night, Ossian takes that opportunity to relate his own actions at the lake of Ledge, and his courtship of Evirallin, who was the mother of Oscar, and had died some time before the expedition of Fingal into Ireland. Her ghost appears to him, and tells him that Oscar, who had been sent, the beginning of the night, to observe the enemy, was engaged with an advanced party, and almost overpowered. Ossian relieves his son, and an alarm is given to Fingal of the approach of Swaran. The king rises, calls his army together, and, as he had promised the preceding night, devolves the command on Gaul, the son of Mor-ni, while he himself, after charging his sons to behave gallantly, and defend his people, retires to a hill, from whence he could have a view of the battle. The battle joins; the poet relates Oscar's great actions. But when Oscar, in conjunction with his father, conquered in one wing, Gaul, who was attacked by Swaran in person, was on the point of retreating in the other. Fingal sends Ullin his bard to encourage him with a war song, but notwithstanding Swaran prevails; and Gaul and his army are obliged to give way. Fingal, descending from the hill, rallies them again: Swaran desists from the pursuit, possesses himself of a rising ground, restores the ranks, and waits the approach of Fingal. The king, having encouraged his men, gives the necessary orders, and renews

the battle. Cuthullin, who, with his friend Connal, and Carril, his bard, had retired to the cave of Tura, hearing the noise, came to the brow of the hill, which overlooked the field of battle, where he saw Fingal engaged with the enemy. He, being hindered by Connal from joining Fingal, who was himself upon the point of obtaining a complete victory, sends Carril to congratulate that hero on his success. **MACPHERSON.**

FIN G A L.

BOOK IV¹.

W_HO comes with her songs from the hill, like
the bow of the showery Lena ² ? It is the maid

¹ Fingal being asleep, and the action suspended by night, the poet introduces the story of his courtship of Evirallin, the daughter of Branno. The episode is necessary to clear up several passages that follow in the poem ; at the same time, that it naturally brings on the action of the book, which may be supposed to begin about the middle of the third night from the opening of the poem. This book, as many of Ossian's other compositions, is addressed to the beautiful Malvina, the daughter of Toscar. She appears to have been in love with Oscar, and to have affected the company of the father after the death of the son. MACPHERSON.

² Who comes *with her songs from the hill, like the bow of the showery Lena.*] “ *Who is this that cometh out of the wilder-*

of the voice of love ! The white-armed daughter of Toscar ! Often hast thou heard my song ; often given the tear of beauty. Dost thou come to the wars of thy people ? to hear the actions of Oscar ? When shall I cease to mourn, by the streams of resounding Cona ? My years have passed away in battle. My age is darkened with grief !

Daughter of the hand of snow ! I was not so mournful and blind ³. I was not so dark and

ness, like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense ?” *Song of Solomon*, iii. 6.

Blair observes, “ that these occasional addresses to Malvina, have a finer effect than the invocation of any muse.” The poet indeed, invokes no muse in the beginning, to avoid apparent imitation ; but addresses to persons or objects not immediately connected with the subject, are invariably prefixed to the lesser poems. Such occasional digressions by the bard in person, are peculiar to modern poetry, and were first introduced by Milton’s address to Urania and to Light, of which the ostentatious addresses to Malvina, and to the sun, moon, and evening star, are no obscure imitations.

³ *Daughter of the hand of snow, I was not so mournful and blind.*] From Ossian’s courtship of Eivallin, (*Suireadh Oisein*), an Irish ballad, beginning thus : “ But I tell you, wanton girl, I was once valiant in battle, though now I am worn out with years.” The wanton girl, or, as translated by others, the daughter of Ionsai, (*Nighean Iunnsai*) who solicited, or rather despised the old bard, is thus converted into Malvina, the

forlorn, when Evirallin loved me ! Evirallin with the dark-brown hair, the white-bosomed daughter of Branno ! A thousand heroes sought the maid, she refused her love to a thousand. The sons of the sword were despised : for graceful in her eyes was Ossian ! I went, in suit of the maid, to Lego's sable surge. Twelve of my people were there, the sons of streamy Morven ! We came to Branno, friend of strangers ! Branno of the sounding mail ! " From whence," he said, " are the arms of steel ? Not easy to win is the maid, who has denied the blue-eyed sons of Erin ! But blest be thou, O son of Fingal ! Happy is the maid that waits thee ! Though twelve daughters of beauty were mine, thine were the choice, thou son of fame !"

He opened the hall of the maid, the dark-haired Evirallin. Joy kindled in our manly breasts. We blest the maid of Branno. Above us on the hill appeared the people of stately Cormac. Eight were the heroes of the chief. The heath flamed wide with their arms. There Col-la ; there Durra of wounds, there mighty Tos-

daughter of Toscar, and Oscar's mistress, a fictitious personage for which there is no foundation, even in tradition.

car, and Tago, there Frestal the victorious stood ;
Dairo of the happy deeds : Dala, the battle's bul-
wark in the narrow way ! The sword flamed in
the hand of Cormac. Graceful was the look of
the hero ! Eight were the heroes of Ossian.
Ullin stormy son of war. Mullo of the generous
deeds. The noble, the graceful Scelacha. Ogar-
lan, and Cerdal, the wrathful. Dumariccan's
brows of death ! And why should Ogar be the
last ⁴ ; so wide renowned on the hills of Ard-
ven ?

Ogar met Dala the strong, face to face, on
the field of heroes. The battle of the chiefs was,
like wind, on ocean's foamy waves. The dag-
ger is remembered by Ogar ; the weapon which
he loved. Nine times he drowned it in Dala's
side. The stormy battle turned. Three times
I broke on Cormac's shield : three times he
broke his spear. But, unhappy youth of love !
I cut his head away. Five times I shook it by
the lock. The friends of Cormac fled. Who-
ever would have told me, lovely maid, when

⁴ *And why should Ogar be the last.*] “ Though *last* not *least*.”
SHAKSPEARE. “ Nor man the *least*, though *last* created.”
MILTON. The episode adheres to the subject and names of
the ballad ; with the additional embellishment of prose sublime.

then I strove in battle ; that blind, forsaken, and forlorn, I now should pass the night ; firm ought his mail to have been ; unmatched his arm in war !

“On ⁵ Lena’s gloomy heath, the voice of music died away. The unconstant blast blew hard. The high oak shook its leaves around. Of Evirallin were my thoughts, when in all the light of beauty she came. Her blue eyes rolling in tears. She stood on a cloud before my sight, and spoke with feeble voice ! “ Rise, Ossian, rise and save my son ; save Oscar, prince of men. Near the red oak of Luba’s stream, he fights with Lochlin’s sons.” She sunk into her cloud again. I covered me with steel. My spear supported my steps ; my rattling armour rung. I hummed, as I was wont in danger ⁶,

⁵ The poet returns to his subject. If one could fix the time of the year in which the action of the poem happened, from the scene described here, I should be tempted to place it in Autumn. The trees shed their leaves, and the winds are variable, both which circumstances agree with that season of the year. MAC-PHERSON.

⁶ *I hummed, as I was wont in danger.*] SHAKSPEARE, *Macbeth*, iii. 6.

The cloudy messenger turned me his back,
And *hums*, as who should say, you’ll rue the time,
That clogged me with this answer.

the songs of heroes of old. Like distant thunder Lochlin heard ⁷. They fled; my son pursued.

I called him like a distant stream. “Oscar, return over Lena! No further pursue the foe,” I said, “though Ossian is behind thee.” He came; and pleasant to my ear was Oscar’s sounding steel. “Why didst thou stop my hand,” he said, “till death had covered all? For dark and dreadful by the stream they met thy son and Fillan! They watched the terrors of the night. Our swords have conquered some. But as the winds of night pour the ocean, over the white sands of Mora, so dark advance the sons of Lochlin, over Lena’s rustling heath! The ghosts of night shriek afar: I have seen the meteors of death ⁸. Let me awake the king

⁷ *Like distant thunder Lochlin heard.*] POPE’S *Temple of Fame*.

Sudden I *heard* a wild promiscuous sound,
Like broken *thunders* that at *distance* roar,
Or foaming billows lash the sounding shore.

Or, as imitated in MACPHERSON’S *Hunter*,

And repercussive walls repel the *sound*:
Thus, lost in *distance*, empty *thunders* roar,
And foaming billows lash the sounding shore.

⁸ *The ghosts of night shriek afar. I have seen the meteors of death.*] *Supra*, iii. ²³. From *Par. Reg.* iii. 422.

of Morven, he that smiles in danger ! He that is like the son of heaven, rising in a storm !”

Fingal had started from a dream, and leaned on Trenmor's shield ; the dark-brown shield of his fathers, which they had lifted of old in war. The hero had seen, in his rest, the mournful form of Agandecca⁹. She came from the way of the ocean. She slowly, lonely, moved over Lena. Her face was pale like the mist of Cromla. Dark were the tears of her cheek. She often raised her dim hand from her robe : her robe, which was of the clouds of the desert¹⁰ :

Infernal *ghosts* and hellish furies round

Environed thee, some howled, some yelled, some *shrieked*,

Some bent at thee their *fiery darts*.

⁹ *The mournful form of Agandecca.*] Margeret's *grimly ghost*, as will appear upon comparison.

¹⁰ *Her face was pale like the mist of Cromla---She often raised her dim hand from her robe : her robe which was of the clouds of the desert.*] MALLET'S *William and Margaret*.

Her face was like an April morn,

Clad in a wintry cloud,

And clay-cold was her *lily hand*.

That held her sable shroud.

So shall the *fairest face* appear,

When youth and years are flown,

Such is the *robe* that kings must wear,

When death has reft their crown.

she raised her dim hand over Fingal, and turned away her silent eyes ! “ Why weeps the daughter of Starno ? ” said Fingal, with a sigh ; “ why is thy face so pale, fair wanderer of the clouds ” ? ” She departed on the wind of Lena. She left him in the midst of the night. She mourned the sons of her people, that were to fall by the hand of Fingal.

The hero started from rest. Still he beheld her in his soul. The sound of Oscar’s steps approached. The king saw the grey shield on his side : For the faint beam of the morning came over the

“ Her face was *pale*,” and, “ dark were the tears of her *cheek*.” Id.

The rose was budded on her *cheek*,

Just opening to the view——

The rose grew *pale* and left her *cheek*,

She died before her time.

¹¹ *She turned away her silent eyes. Why weeps the daughter of Starno. Why is thy face so pale, fair wanderer of the clouds.*] Id.

Why did you swear my *eyes* were bright,

Yet leave those *eyes* to weep ?

How could you say my *face* was fair,

And yet that face forsake ?

That *face*, alas, no more is fair,

Those lips no more are red,

Dark are my *eyes*, now closed in death,

And every charm is fled.

“ *Dark* were the tears of her cheek.”

waters of Ullin ¹². “What do the foes in their fear?” said the rising king of Morven; “or fly they through ocean’s foam, or wait they the battle of steel? But why should Fingal ask? I hear their voice on the early wind! Fly over Lena’s heath: O Oscar, awake our friends!”

The king stood by the stone of Lubar. Thrice

¹² *The hero started from rest. Still he beheld her in his soul--- For the faint beam of the morning came over the waters of Ullin.*] Id.

The lark sung loud, the morning smiled,
With beams of rosy red,
Pale William quaked in every limb,
And raving left his bed.

The ballad of *William and Margaret*, the only memorial that will remain of Mallet, finds something responsive in every bosom. The ghost of Hamlet still appals the spectators at its entrance; but if the spectre were arrayed in the mimic clouds of the theatre, the charm would be dissolved. Such is the incongruity of converting the shroud, “The robe that kings must wear,” into a robe composed of the clouds of the desert, &c. that the descriptions of Ossian’s ghosts are read without either commiseration or terror; and, like a “steed of water, with housings of sand,” in some Tale of Wonder, are dismissed without any other emotion than surprise at an assemblage of discordant images. But I presume, that I shall hear no more of the mythology of Ossian, nor be told again, “That it is peculiar to himself;” yet, at the same time, “that it is the mythology of human nature, founded upon what has been the popular belief in all ages and nations, and under all forms of religion, concerning the appearance of departed spirits.” See BLAIR’S *Dissertation*.

he reared his terrible voice. The deer started from the fountains of Cromla. The rocks shook on all their hills. Like the noise of a hundred mountain-streams, that burst, and roar, and foam ! like the clouds, that gather to a tempest on the blue face of the sky ¹³ ! so met the sons of the desert, round the terrible voice of Fingal. Pleasant was the voice of the king of Morven to the warriors of his land. Often had he led them to battle ; often returned with the spoils of the foe !

“ Come to battle,” said the king, “ ye children of echoing Selma ! Come to the death of thousands. Comhal’s son will see the fight. My sword shall wave on the hill, the defence of my people in war. But never may you need it, warriors : while the son of Morni fights, the chief of mighty men ! He shall lead my battle ; that his fame may rise in song ! O ye ghosts of heroes dead ! ye riders of the storm of Cromla ! receive my falling people with joy, and bear

¹³ *Like the clouds that gather to a tempest on the blue face of the sky.*] Literally from the *Highlander*, iv. 13.

On the blue sky the gathering clouds arise,
And tempests clap their wings along the skies.

them to your hills. And may the blast of Lena carry them over my seas, that they may come to my silent dreams, and delight my soul in rest ! Fillan and Oscar, of the dark-brown hair ! fair Ryno, with the pointed steel ! advance with valour to the fight. Behold the son of Morni ! Let your swords be like his in strife : behold the deeds of his hand. Protect the friends of your father. Remember the chiefs of old. My children, I will see you yet, though here ye should fall in Erin. Soon shall our cold, pale ghosts meet in a cloud on Cona's eddying winds."

Now, like a dark and stormy cloud, edged round with the red lightning of heaven ; flying westward from the morning's beam¹⁴, the king

¹⁴ *Like a dark and stormy cloud, edged round with the red lightning of heaven ; flying westward before the morning's beam.]*
Terrible is the light of his armour. Two spears are in his hand.
Æn. viii. 619.

Interque manus et brachia versat
Terribilem cristis galeam, flammisque vomentem,
Fatiferumque ensem, loricam ex ære rigentem,
Sanguineam, ingentem : qualis, cum cœrula nubes
Solis inardescit radiis, longeque refulget.
Tum leves ocreas electro auroque recocto,
Hastamque, et clypei non enarabile textum.
His hands the fatal sword and corslet hold,
One keen with tempered steel, one stiff with gold :

of Selma removed. Terrible is the light of his armour ; two spears are in his hand. His grey hair falls on the wind. He often looks back on the war. Three bards attend the son of fame, to bear his words to the chiefs. High on Crom-la's side he sat, waving the lightning of his sword, and as he waved we moved.

Joy rises in Oscar's face. His cheek is red. His eye sheds tears. The sword is a beam of fire in his hand. He came, and smiling, spoke to Ossian. " O ruler of the fight of steel ! my father, hear thy son ! Retire with Morven's mighty chief. Give me the fame of Ossian. If here I fall : O chief, remember that breast of snow, the lonely sun-beam of my love, the white-handed daughter of Toscar ! For, with red cheek from the rock, bending over the stream, her soft hair flies about her bosom, as she pours the sigh for Oscar. Tell her I am on my hills, a lightly-bounding son of the wind ; tell her, that in a cloud, I may meet the lovely

Both ample, *flaming* both, and *beamy bright* :
So shines a *cloud*, when *edged* with *adverse light* :
He shakes the pointed *spear*.

DRYDEN.

maid of Toscar." "Raise, Oscar, rather raise my tomb. I will not yield the war to thee. The first and bloodiest in the strife, my arm shall teach thee how to fight. But, remember, my son, to place this sword, this bow, the horn of my deer, within that dark and narrow house, whose mark is one grey stone ! Oscar, I have no love to leave to the care of my son. Evirallin is no more, the lovely daughter of Branno !"

Such were our words, when Gaul's loud voice came growing on the wind. He waved on high the sword of his father. We rushed to death and wounds. As waves, white-bubbling over the deep, come swelling, roaring on ; as rocks of ooze meet roaring waves¹⁵ : so foes attacked and fought. Man met with man, and steel with

¹⁵ *As waves white bubbling over the deep, come swelling, roaring on ; as rocks of ooze meet roaring waves.*] POPE's *Homer. Iliad*, iv. 478.

As when the winds, ascending by degrees,
First move the *whitening surface* of the seas,
The billows float in order to the shore,
The *wave* behind rolls on the *wave* before ;
Till, with the growing storm, the *deeps arise*,
Foam o'er the *rocks* and *thunder* to the skies.
So to the *fight* the thick battalions throng,
Shields urg'd on *shields*, and *men* drove *men* along.

steel. Shields sound, and warriors fall. As a hundred hammers on the red son of the furnace, so rose, so rung their swords !

Gaul rushed on, like a whirlwind in Ardven¹⁶. The destruction of heroes is on his sword. Swaran was like the fire of the desert in the echoing heath of Gormal¹⁷ ! How can I give to the song the death of many spears¹⁸ ? My sword rose high, and flamed in the strife of blood. Oscar, terrible wert thou, my best, my greatest son ! I rejoiced in my secret soul, when his sword flamed over the slain. They fled amain through Lena's heath. We pursued and slew.

" So foes attacked and fought. Man met with man, and steel with steel. Shields sound and warriors fall."

¹⁶ *Gaul rushed on like a whirlwind in Ardven.*] Ode on Earl Marischal's Return.

He rushed on like a storm, dispersed and weak they fly.

¹⁷ *Swaran was like the fire of the desert, in the echoing heath of Gormal.*] Hardyknute.

Quhair like a fire to heather set,

Bauld Thomas did advance.

¹⁸ *How can I give to song the deaths of many spears.*] *Supra*, i. 41. *Iliad*, ii. 488.

ΠΑΗΘΥΝ δ' οὐκ ἄν ἐγὼ ΜΥΘΗΣΟΜΑΙ, οὐδ' ὀΝΟΜΗΝΩ.

Georg. ii. 42.

Non ego cuncta meis amplecti versibus opto.

As stones that bound from rock to rock ¹⁹; as axes in echoing woods ²⁰; as thunder rolls from hill to hill, in dismal broken peals; so blow succeeded to blow, and death to death ²¹, from the hand of Oscar and mine.

But Swaran closed round Morni's son, as the strength of the tide of Inistore. The king half-

¹⁹ *As stones that bound from rock to rock.*] POPE's *Iliad*, xiii. 191.

As, from some mountain's craggy forehead torn,
A rock's round fragment flies, with fury borne,
(Which from the stubborn stone a torrent rends)
Precipitate the ponderous mass descends :
From steep to steep the rolling ruin bounds ;
At every shock the crackling wood resounds.

²⁰ *As axes in echoing woods.*] *Id.* xvi. 767.

As through the shrilling vale, or mountain ground,
The labours of the wood-man's axe resound ;
Blows following blows are heard re-echoing wide,
While crackling forests fell on every side.

"So blow succeeded to blow." See the *Highlander*, ii. 109.

²¹ *As thunder rolls from hill to hill---so blow succeeded to blow, and death to death.*] And, "They fled amain through Lena's heath." From MACPHERSON'S Ode on the Earl Marischal's Return.

When through an aged wood,
The thunder roars amain,
His paths with oaks are strewed,
And ruin marks the plain :
So many a German field can tell,
How in his path the mighty heroes fell.

rose from his hill at the sight. He half-assumed the spear. "Go, Ullin, go, my aged bard," begun the king of Morven. "Remind the mighty Gaul of war. Remind him of his fathers. Support the yielding fight with song; for song enlivens war." Tall Ullin went, with step of age, and spoke to the king of swords. "Son²² of the chief of generous steeds! high-bounding king of spears. Strong arm in every perilous toil. Hard heart that never yields. Chief of the pointed arms of death. Cut down the foe; let no white sail bound round dark Inistore. Be thine arm like thunder. Thine eyes like fire, thy heart of solid rock. Whirl round thy sword as a meteor at night; lift thy shield like the flame of death. Son of the chief of generous steeds, cut down the foe. Destroy!" The hero's heart beat high. But Swaran came

²² The custom of encouraging men in battle with extempore rhymes, has been carried down almost to our own times. Several of these war songs are extant, but the most of them are only a group of epithets, without either beauty or harmony, utterly destitute of poetical merit. MACPHERSON. •

Ullin's war-song is derived from an ode or address to Gaul, among the Irish ballads. But the ballad is merely a panegyric upon Gaul, not an exhortation to battle, much less a branch of an epic poem.

with battle. He cleft the shield of Gaul in twain. The sons of Selma fled.

Fingal at once arose in arms. Thrice he reared his dreadful voice. Cromla answered around. The sons of the desert stood still ²³. They bent their blushing faces to earth, ashamed at the presence of the king. He came, like a cloud of rain in the day of the sun, when slow

²³ Thrice *he reared his dreadful voice. Cromla answered around. The sons of the desert stood still.*] POPE'S *Iliad*, xviii. 255.

Forth marched the chief, and, distant from the croud,
High on the rampart *raised his voice* aloud——
Struck from the walls, the *echoes* float on high,
And the *round* bulwarks and thick towers *reply* ;
So high his brazen *voice* the hero *reared*,
Hosts *drop their arms*, and *trembled* as they heard——
Thrice from the trench his *dreadful voice* he *raised*,
And thrice they fled, confounded and amazed.

Blair observes, that “ Homer’s art in magnifying the character of Achilles, has been universally admired ;” but, that “ Osian certainly shews no less art in aggrandizing Fingal,” whom “ Gaul has brought to retire, and to leave to him and his other chiefs the honour of the day. The generosity of the king in agreeing to this proposal, the majesty with which he retreats to the hill, &c. his *rising* in his might, and *interposing like a divinity*, to decide the doubtful fate of the day, are all circumstances *contrived with so much art*, as plainly to discover the *Celtic bard* to have been *not unpractised* in heroic poetry.” *Supra*, iii. 30.

it rolls on the hill, and fields expect the shower²⁴.
*Silence attends its slow progress aloft; but the
 tempest is soon to arise*²⁵. Swaran beheld the ter-
 rible king of Morven. He stopped in the midst
 of his course. Dark he leaned on his spear, rol-
 ling his red eyes around. Silent and tall he seem-
 ed as an oak on the banks of Lubar, which had

²⁴ *He came like a cloud of rain in the day of the sun, when
 slow it rolls on the hill, and fields expect the shower*]---“ But the
 tempest is soon to arise.” *Iliad*, xvi. 364.

Ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἀπ' ΟΥΛΥΜΠΟΥ ΝΕΦΟΣ ΕΡΧΕΤΑΙ οὐρανὸν εἴσω,
 ΑΙΘΕΡΟΣ ἐκ ΔΙΗΣ, ὅτε τε Ζεὺς ΔΑΙΔΑΠΑ τείνει'.

As when the hand of Jove a *tempest* forms,
 And rolls the clouds to blacken heaven with storms,
 Dark o'er the *fields* the ascending vapour flies,
 And shades the *sun* and blots the golden skies.

POPE.

²⁵ *Silence attends its slow progress aloft, but the tempest is
 soon to arise.*] Not inserted in the first editions. THOMSON,
Summer.

A boding *silence* reigns,
 Dread through the dim expanse.

Spring.

"Tis *silence* all

And pleasing *expectation*; herds and flocks
 Drop the dry twig, and, mute imploring, eye
 The falling verdure.

“ And fields *expect* the shower,” in the preceding sentence.
 But, by this intermixture of Homer and Thomson, the fields,
 like *mute imploring* herds, *expect the shower*, at the same time
 that *the tempest is soon to arise*.

its branches blasted of old by the lightning of heaven²⁶. It bends over the stream: the grey moss whistles in the wind: so stood the king. Then slowly he retired to the rising heath of Lena. His thousands pour around the hero. Darkness gathers on the hill!

Fingal, like a beam from heaven, shone in the midst of his people. His heroes gather around him. He sends forth the voice of his power. "Raise my standards on high; spread them on Lena's wind, like the flames of an hundred hills! Let them sound on the winds²⁷ of Erin, and re-

²⁶ *Silent and tall---as an oak---which had its branches blasted of old by the lightning of heaven,]---"So stood the king."* Another repetition of Milton's, "Faithful *how* they stood. Their glory withered."

As when *heaven's fire*

Hath scathed the forest *oaks*, or mountain pines,
With *singed top* their *stately* growth, though bare,
Stands on the *blasted* heath.

²⁷ *He sends forth the voice of power. Raise my standards on high.---Let them sound in the winds.] Par. Lost, i. 531.*

Then straight *commands*, that at the warlike sound
Of trumpets loud, and clarions, be *upreared*
His mighty *standard*,-----

----- Which, full *high* advanced,

Shone like a meteor streaming to the wind.

Or, as altered by Macpherson, "*Spread them on Lena's wind, like the flames of an hundred hills.*"

mind us of the fight. Ye sons of the roaring streams, that pour from a thousand hills, be near the king of Morven ! attend to the words of his power ! Gaul strongest arm of death ! O Oscar, of the future fights ! Connal son of the blue shields of Sora ! Dermid of the dark-brown hair ! Ossian king of many songs, be near your father's arm !" We reared the sun-beam ²⁸ of battle ; the standard of the king ! Each hero exulted with joy, as, waving, it flew on the wind. It was studded with gold above, as the blue wide shell of the nightly sky ²⁹. Each hero had his standard too ; and each his gloomy men !

" Behold," said the king of generous shells,

²⁸ Fingal's standard was distinguished by the name of *sun-beam* ; probably on account of its bright colour, and its being studded with gold. To begin a battle, is expressed, in old composition, by *lifting of the sun-beam*. MACPHERSON.

" We set up the *Deo-greina* upon a tree, the standard of the fierce Fingal, full of gold stones, and by us much esteemed." Ballad of *Magnus* ; the sole foundation of Fingal.

²⁹ *Each hero's soul exulted with joy---It was studded with gold above, like the blue wide shell of the nightly sky.*] First edit. POPE's *Iliad*, viii. 697.

The conscious swains, rejoicing at the sight,
Eye the blue vault, and bless the useful light.

“how Lochlin divides on Lena ! they stand like broken clouds on a hill³⁰; or an half-consumed grove of oaks : when we see the sky through its branches, and the meteor passing behind ! Let every chief among the friends of Fingal take a dark troop of those that frown so high : Nor let a son of the echoing groves bound on the waves of Inistore !

“ Mine,” said Gaul, “ be the seven chiefs, that came from Lano’s lake.” “ Let Inistore’s dark king,” said Oscar, “ come to the sword of Ossian’s son.” To mine the king of Iniscon,” said Connal, “ heart of steel !” “ Or Mudan’s chief or I,” said brown-haired Dermid, “ shall sleep on clay-cold earth.” My choice, though now so weak and dark, was Terman’s battling king ; I promised with my hand to win the hero’s dark-brown shield. “ Blest and victorious

³⁰ *They stand like broken clouds on a hill.*] *Highlander*, iii. 67.

The *broken clouds* from every quarter sail,
Join their black troops, and all the heavens vail.---
So, when the youthful Haco from afar
Collects the *broken* fragments of the war.

But the half-consumed grove of oaks, is another variation of Milton’s simile, diversified by the sky seen through the branches, and the meteor passing behind.

be my chiefs ³¹," said Fingal of the mildest look. "Swaran, king of roaring waves, thou art the choice of Fingal!"

Now, like a hundred different winds, that pour through many vales; divided, dark the sons of Selma advanced. Cromla echoed around ³²! How can I relate the deaths, when we closed in the strife of arms! O daughter of Toscar! bloody were our hands! The gloomy ranks of Lochlin fell, like the banks of the roaring Cona! Our arms were victorious on Lena: each chief fulfilled his promise! Beside the murmur of Branno thou didst often sit, O maid! thy white bosom rose frequent like the down of

³¹ Blessed *and victorious be my chiefs.*] A christian benediction, from the ballad of *Magnus*, from which, with the usual alterations, the whole paragraph is taken. Gaul, Ossian, Connal, and Dermid, undertake to quell their respective opponents, and to cut off their heads, and Ossian himself, *though this night without vigour*, engages, in the spirit of the times, not to win the shield, but to sever king Terman's head from his body. "Take a blessing, and gain the victory, said Comhal's son of the red cheeks; Magnus Macghara of multitudes, I undertake to conquer, though his fury be great."

³² *Like a hundred different winds that pour through many vales.*---Cromla echoed around.] POPE's *Iliad*, xvi. 923.

So pent by hills, the wild winds roar aloud,
In the deep bosom of some echoing wood.

the swan when slow she swims on the lake ³³, and sidelong winds *blow on her ruffled wing*. Thou hast seen the sun retire, red and slow behind his

³³ *Thy white bosom rose frequent like the down of the swan, when slow she swims on the lake.*] From MILTON. *Par. Lost*, vii. 437.

Others, on silver lakes and rivers, bathed
Their downy breasts ; the swan, with arched neck,
Between her white wings mantling proudly, rows
Her state with oary feet.

“ And sidelong winds blow on her *ruffled wing*.” In the first editions, “ when slow she *sails* the lake, and sidelong winds are blowing.” From THOMSON ;

The stately sailing swan

Gives out her snowy plumage to the gale.

and GRAY.

With *ruffled plumes* and *flagging wing*.

Her *white bosom rising frequent like the down of the swan*, is Milton's *downy breasts*---between her *white wings mantling*. *When slow she sails the lake*, is Thomson's *stately sailing swan*, and the very construction of “ proudly rows her state---on silver lakes.” “ When sidelong winds are blowing,” or, as restored in the improved edition, “ blow on her *ruffled wing*,” is equivalent to “ Gives out her snowy plumage to the gale,” “ With *ruffled plumes* and *flagging wing* ;” and to complete the imitation, Milton and Ossian are the only poets, ancient or modern, who have rendered the swan of the feminine gender. The description itself is undoubtedly beautiful, as the sources from which it is derived are beautiful. But the design of this incoherent apostrophe (“ By the murmur of Branno thou didst often sit, &c. Thou hast seen the sun,” &c.) is not very intelligible ;

cloud³⁴; night gathering round on the mountain, while the unfrequent blast roared in the narrow vales. At length the rain beats hard: thunder rolls in peals. Lightning glances on the rocks! Spirits ride on beams of fire³⁵! The strength of the mountain-streams comes roaring down the hills³⁶. Such was the noise of battle, maid of the arms of snow! Why, daughter

and the subject of comparison, "Her white breast rising frequent, like the down of the swan, ruffled by the wind," is a mere modern prettiness of thought.

³⁴ *Thou hast seen the sun retire, red and slow behind his cloud.*] VIRG. *Georg.* i. 440. Quoted by Macpherson, 1st edit.

Ille ubi nascentem maculis variaverit ortum
Conditus in nubem, medioque refugerit orbe.

But the modern phraseology, "Thou hast seen the sun," is from the *Flowers of the Forest*. "I have seen the morning."

³⁵ *Spirits rode on beams of fire.*] SHAKESPEARE, *All's Well that Ends Well*, iii. 2.

O you leaden messengers,

That ride upon the violent speed of fire.

But the description of the tempest seems to be taken from *Paradise Regained*, iv. 409.

³⁶ *The strength of the mountain-streams comes roaring down the hills.*] ÆN. iv. 165. Quoted by Macpherson.

Ruunt de montibus annes.

Or rather from Thomson,

Resistless, roaring, dreadful, down it comes
From the rude mountain.

of Toscar, why that tear ? The maids of Lochlin have cause to weep ! The people of their country fell. Bloody were the blue swords of the race of my heroes ! But I am sad, forlorn, and blind : no more the companion of heroes. Give, lovely maid, to me thy tears. I have seen the tombs of all my friends !

It was then, by Fingal's hand, a hero fell, to his grief³⁷ ! Grey-haired he rolled in the dust. He lifted his faint eyes to the king³⁸. " And is it by me thou hast fallen," said the son of Comhal, " thou friend of Agandecca ! I have seen thy tears for the maid of my love in the halls of the bloody Starno ! Thou hast been the foe of the foes of my love, and hast thou fallen by my

³⁷ *It was then by Fingal's hand, a hero fell, to his grief.]* For I have slain a man *to my wounding*, and a young man *to my hurt*. *Genesis*, iv. 23.

³⁸ *Grey-haired he rolled in the dust, and lifted his faint eyes to the king.]* *Æn.* x. 781.

*Sternitur infelix alieno vulnere, cælumque
Aspicit, et dulces moriens reminiscitur Argos.*

Now falling by another's wound, his eyes
He casts to heaven, on Argos thinks, and dies.

"He lifted his faint eyes to the king," to whom his last thoughts of Lochlin are transferred, to avoid apparent imitation.

hand? Raise, Ullin, raise the grave of Mathon; and give his name to Agandecca's song. Dear to my soul hast thou been, thou darkly-dwelling maid of Ardven!"

Cuthullin, from the cave of Cromla, heard the noise of the troubled war. He called to Connal, chief of swords; to Carril of other times. The grey-haired heroes heard his voice. They took their pointed spears. They came, and saw the tide of battle, like ocean's crowded waves: when the dark wind blows from the deep, and rolls the billows through the sandy vale ³⁹! Cuthullin kindled at the sight. Darkness gathered on his brow. His hand is on the sword of his fathers: his red-rolling eyes on the foe.

³⁹ *Like ocean's crowded waves, when the dark wind blows from the deep, and rolls the billows through the sandy vale.*] POPE'S *Iliad*, xiii. 999.

As when from gloomy clouds a *whirlwind* springs,
That bears Jove's thunder on its dreadful wings,
Wide o'er the blasted fields a tempest sweeps;
Then gathered, settles on the hoary *deeps*;
Th' afflicted *deeps* tumultuous mix and roar;
The *waves* behind *impel* the *waves* before,
Wide rolling, foaming high, and *tumbling* to the shore:
Thus rank to rank, &c.

Or, "the tide of battle, like ocean's crowded waves;" in which the application of the simile is also the same.

He thrice attempted to rush to battle. He thrice was stopt by Connal. "Chief of the isle of mist," he said, "Fingal subdues the foe. Seek not a part of the fame of the king ; himself is like the storm !"

"Then, Carril, go," replied the chief, "go, greet the king of Morven. When Lochlin falls away like a stream after rain : when the noise of the battle is past. Then be thy voice sweet in his ear to praise the king of Selma ! Give him the sword of Caithbat. Cuthullin is not worthy to lift the arms of his fathers ! Come, O ye ghosts of the lonely Cromla ! ye souls of chiefs that are no more ! be near the steps of Cuthullin ; talk to him in the cave of his grief. Never more shall I be renowned, among the mighty in the land. I am a beam that has shone ; a mist that has fled away ⁴⁰ : when the blast of the morning came, and brightened the shaggy side of the hill ! Connal ! talk of arms

⁴⁰ *I am a beam that has shone, a mist that has fled away.]*

"And our life shall *pass away* as the trace of a cloud, and shall be dispersed as a *mist* that is *driven away* by the *beams* of the *sun*, and overcome by the heat thereof." *Wisdom of Solomon*, ii. 4.

no more : departed is my fame. My sighs shall be on Cromla's wind ; till my footsteps cease to be seen. And thou, white-bosomed Bragela, mourn over the fall of my fame : vanquished, I will never return to thee, thou sun-beam of my soul !”

FINGAL,
AN
EPIC POEM;
BOOK V.

ARGUMENT TO BOOK V.

Cuthullin and Connal still remain on the hill. Fingal and Swaran meet; the combat is described. Swaran is overcome, bound and delivered over as a prisoner to the care of Ossian, and Gaul the son of Morni; Fingal, his younger sons, and Oscar, still pursue the enemy. The episode of Orla, a chief of Lochlin, who was mortally wounded in the battle, is introduced. Fingal, touched with the death of Orla, orders the pursuit to be discontinued; and, calling his sons together, he is informed that Ryno, the youngest of them, was slain. He laments his death, hears the story of Lamdarg and Gelchossa, and returns towards the place where he had left Swaran. Carril, who had been sent by Cuthullin to congratulate Fingal on his victory, comes in the mean time to Ossian. The conversation of the two poets closes the action of the fourth day. **MACPHERSON.**

FIN GAL.

BOOK V.

ON Cromla's resounding side, Connal spoke to the chief of the noble car. Why that gloom, son of Semo? Our friends are the mighty in fight. Renowned art thou, O warrior! many were the deaths of thy steel. Often has Brage-la met, with blue-rolling eyes of joy: often has she met her hero, returning in the midst of the valiant; when his sword was red with slaughter; when his foes were silent in the fields of the tomb. Pleasant to her ears were thy bards, when thy deeds arose in song.

But behold the king of Morven! He moves, below, like a pillar of fire. His strength is like

the stream of Lubar, or the wind of the echoing Cromla ; when the branchy forests of night are torn from all their rocks ! Happy are thy people, O Fingal ! thine arm shall finish their wars. Thou art the first in their dangers : the wisest in the days of their peace¹. Thou speakest and thy thousands obey² : armies tremble at the sound of thy steel. Happy are thy people, O Fingal, king of resounding Selma ! Who is that so dark and terrible, coming in the thunder of his course ? who but Starno's son to meet the king of Morven ? Behold the battle of the chiefs ! it is the storm of the ocean, when two spirits meet far distant, and contend for the rolling of waves³. The hunter hears the noise on his

¹ Happy are thy people, O Fingal ! *Thou art the first in their danger ; the wisest in the days of their peace.*] The Queen of Sheba's address to Solomon. "*Happy are thy men, and happy are these thy servants,* which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom." II. Chron. ix. 7.

² *Thou speakest and thy thousands obey.*] Par. Lost, i. 663.
He spake, and to confirm his words, out-flew
Millions of flaming swords.

³ *The storm of the ocean, when two spirits meet far distant, and contend for the rolling of waves.*] Iliad, ix. 4.

ὦς δ' ANEMOI ΔΥΟ πάντων ὀρίμετον ἰχθυόεντα,
ΒΟΡΕΉΣ καὶ ΖΕΦΥΡΟΣ, τῷ τε Θρήκηθεν ἄητον,

hill. He sees the high billows advancing to Ardven's shore ⁴!

Such were the words of Connal, when the heroes met, in fight. There was the clang of arms! there every blow, like the hundred hammers of

Ἐλθόντ' ἑξαπίνης· ἄμυδ' δέ τε κύμα κελαινὸν
Κορθύεται, πολλὸν δὲ παρ' ἑξ' ἄλλα φῦκος ἔχευαν'.

As translated in the *Highlander*, ii. 81.

Thus when *two winds* descend upon the main,
To fight their battles on the watery plain;
In two black lines the equal waters crowd,
On either side the white topped ridges nod;
At length they break and raise a bubbling sound,
While echo rumbles to the rocks around.

The two winds that descend to fight their battles on the main, are converted, as usual, into two spirits (Boreas and Zephyrus) that contend for the rolling of waves.

⁴ *The hunter hears the noise on his hill. He sees the high billows advancing to Ardven's shore.] Iliad, iv. 455.*

Τῶν δέ τε ΤΗΛΟΣΣΕ ΔΟΥΠΟΝ ἐν ΟΥΡΕΣΙΝ ΕΚΛΥΕ ΠΟΙΜΗΝ.

The *distant shepherd*, trembling, *hears the sound*.

And id. 275.

Ὦς δ' ὅτ' ἀπὸ σκοπιῆς ΕΙΔΕΝ νέφος ΑΙΠΟΛΟΣ ΑΝΗΡ,
Ἐρχόμενον κατὰ ΠΟΝΤΟΝ ὑπὸ Ζεφύροιο ἰωῆς.

Thus from the lofty promontory's brow,
A swain *surveys* the gathering storm below.

POPE.

These images, which were avoided in the imitation of Homer's similes of the two torrents, &c. are now united. "The startled shepherd who *hears the noise* as he stalks over his *distant hills*," "the swain who, from a rock's lofty brow *beholds* a cloud—rush-

the furnace ! Terrible is the battle of the kings ⁵ ;
 dreadful the look of their eyes. Their dark-
 brown shields are cleft in twain. Their steel
 flies, broken, from their helms. They fling their
 weapons down. Each rushes to his hero's grasp.
 Their sinewy arms bend round each other ;
 they turn from side to side, and strain and
 stretch their large spreading limbs below ⁶.

ing over the whitening main," (Macpherson's *Homer*, i. 108. 117.) are here converted into " the hunter who *hears* on his *hill* the noise of two spirits *far distant* ;" and who "*sees* the high billows advancing to Ardven's shore."

⁵ *Terrible was the battle of the kings, &c.*] In the Ballad of Fingal and Magnus, " Like the strokes of *two hammers* was the bloody battle of the two kings, whose countenances were very furious. After the red shield was broken, they threw their weapons down, and *wrestled* for victory. The king of Lochlin at last was overthrown upon the shore, and though unbecoming a king, his three smalls (hands, neck, and heels) were bound."

⁶ *Each rushes to his hero's grasp. Their sinewy arms bend round each other. They stretch their large spreading limbs below.*] The wrestling match between Ulysses and Ajax. POPE's *Iliad*, xxiii. 822.

Amid the ring, each *nervous* rival stands,
 Embracing rigid with implicit hands ;
 Close locked above, their heads and *arms* are mixt ;
 Below, their planted feet, *at distance* fixed :
 Now to the *grasp* each manly bosom *bends* ;
 The humid sweat from every pore descends ;
 Their *bones* resound with blows.

But when the pride of their strength arose, they shook the hill with their heels. Rocks tumble from their places on high ⁷; the green-shaded bushes are overturned. At length the strength of Swaran fell: the king of the groves is bound. Thus have I seen on Cona; but Cona I behold no more! thus have I seen two dark hills, removed from their place, by the strength of the bursting stream. They turn from side to side in their fall; their tall oaks meet one another on high. Then they tumble together ⁸ with

Or, "their bones crack like the boat of ocean," in the wrestling match between Fingal and Gaul. *Fragments*, viii.

⁷ *They shook the hill with their heels. Rocks tumble from their places on high.*] Dissultant ripæ. *Supra*, i. n. ⁸. An amplification of the ballad; "There were stones and heavy earth opening beneath their feet!" or, as improved in the *Fragments*, "The earth was ploughed with their heels."

⁸ *They turn from side to side—Then they tumble together.*] *Iliad*, xxiii. 851.

And grappling close, they tumble side by side.

But the comparison itself requires further illustration. In the wrestling match between Fingal and Gaul: "With night they fell on the plain, as two oaks with their branches mingled, fall, crashing from the hill." The two oaks with their branches mingled, are the two rafters to which Ajax and Ulysses are compared in the *Iliad*. *Ibid*.

Close locked above, their heads and arms are mixt;

Below, their planted feet, at distance fixt:

all their rocks and trees. The streams are turned by their side. The red ruin is seen afar.

“ Sons of distant Morven,” said Fingal :
“ guard the king of Lochlin. He is strong as
his thousand waves. His hand is taught to war.
His race is of the times of old. Gaul, thou first
of my heroes : Ossian, king of songs, attend.
He is the friend of Agandecca ; raise to joy his
grief. But, Oscar, Fillan, and Ryno, ye children
of the race ! pursue Lochlin over Lena ; that no
vessel may hereafter bound, on the dark-rolling
waves of Inistore !”

Like *two strong rafters* which the builder forms
Proof to the wintry wind and howling storms,
Their *tops connected*, but at wider space
Fixt on the centre stands their solid base.

But the two oaks, with their branches mingled, are here converted into two hills, whose tall oaks meet one another on high. “ Thus have I seen on Cona, but Cona I behold no more ! thus have I seen two dark *hills* removed from their *place* by the strength of the bursting stream. They turn from *side to side* : their tall oaks meet one another on high. Then they tumble together *with all their rocks and trees.*” An imitation of Milton. *Par. Lost*, vi. 195.

As if on earth

Winds under ground, or waters forcing vent,
Sidelong had pushed a *mountain* from his *seat*,
Half sunk *with all his pines.*

They flew sudden across the heath. He slowly moved, like a cloud of thunder, when the sultry plain of summer is silent, and dark ⁹ ! His sword is before him as a sun-beam ; terrible as the streaming meteor of night. He came toward a chief of Lochlin. He spoke to the son of the wave. “ Who is that so dark and sad, at the rock of the roaring stream ? He cannot bound over its course : How stately is the chief ! His bossy shield is on his side ; his spear, like the tree of the desert ! Youth of the dark-red hair, art thou of the foes of Fingal ? ”

“ I am a son of Lochlin,” he cries, “ strong is my arm in war. My spouse is weeping at home. Orla ¹⁰ shall never return ! ” “ Or fights or

⁹ *He slowly moved, like a cloud of thunder, when the sultry plain of summer is silent and dark.*] From the *Thunder-storm* in Thomson’s *Summer*.

Behold, *slow* settling o’er the lurid grove,

Unusual *darkness* broods ;

And in yon *baleful* cloud,

A reddening gloom, a magazine of fate

Ferment :

A boding *silence* reigns,

Dread through the dun expanse.

¹⁰ The story of Orla is so beautiful and affecting in the original, that many are in possession of it in the north of Scotland,

yields the hero," said Fingal of the noble deeds ?
" Foes do not conquer in my presence : my friends are renowned in the hall. Son of the wave, follow me, partake the feast of my shells : pursue the deer of my desert : be thou the friend of Fingal." " No : " said the hero, " I assist the feeble. My strength is with the weak in arms. My sword has been always unmatched, O warrior : let the king of Morven yield ! " " I never yielded, Orla, Fingal never yielded to man. Draw thy sword and chuse thy foe. Many are my heroes ! "

" Does then the king refuse the fight," said Orla of the dark-brown shield ! " Fingal is a match for Orla : and he alone of all his race ! But, king of Morven, if I shall fall ; as one time the warrior must die ; raise my tomb in the midst : let it be the greatest on Lena. Send, over the dark-blue wave, the sword of Orla to the spouse of his love ; that she may shew it to

who never heard a syllable more of the poem. MACPHERSON, First edition.

In consequence of this intimation, the Death of Orla was attested to Dr Blair, among other ballads known in the Highlands ; but neither that, nor the Death of Agandecca, has been hitherto discovered.

her son, with tears, to kindle his soul to war.”
 “Son of the mournful tale,” said Fingal, “why dost thou awaken my tears? One day the warriors must die, and the children see their useless arms in the hall. But, Orla, thy tomb shall rise. Thy white-bosomed spouse shall weep over thy sword.”

They fought on the heath of Lena. Feeble was the arm of Orla. The sword of Fingal descended, and cleft his shield in twain. It fell and glittered on the ground, as the moon on the ruffled stream¹¹. “King of Morven,” said the hero, “lift thy sword and pierce my breast. Wounded and faint from battle, my friends have left me here. The mournful tale shall come to my love, on the banks of the streamy Lota;

¹¹ Glittered—*as the moon on the ruffled stream.*] “On the stream of night.” First edit. A simile first employed by Apollonius Rhodius (*Argonaut.* iii. 756.); improved by Virgil; and transmitted in regular succession to Ossian. *Æn.* viii. 22.

*Sicut aquæ tremulum labris ubi lumen ænis
 Sole repperçussum, aut radiantis imagine lunæ,
 Omnia pervolitat late loca, jamque sub auras
 Erigitur, summique ferit laquearia tecti.*

So when the sun by day, or moon by night,
 Strike on the polish'd brass their trembling light,
 The glittering species here and there divide, &c.

DRYDEN.

when she is alone in the wood ; and the rustling blast in the leaves !”

“No ;” said the king of Morven, “I will never wound thee, Orla. On the banks of Lota let her see thee, escaped from the hands of war. Let thy grey-haired father, who, perhaps, is blind with age. Let him hear the sound of thy voice, and brighten within his hall. With joy let the hero rise, and search for his son with his hands !”

“But never will he find him, Fingal ;” said the youth of the streamy Lota. “On Lena’s heath I must die : foreign bards shall talk of me. My broad belt covers my wound of death. I give it to the wind ¹² !”

The dark blood poured from his side, he fell pale on the heath of Lena. Fingal bent over him as he dies, and called his younger chiefs.

“Oscar and Fillan, my sons, raise high the memory of Orla. Here let the dark-haired hero rest, far from the spouse of his love. Here let him rest in his narrow house far from the sound of Lota. The feeble will find his bow at home ;

¹² *My broad Belt covers my wound of death. And now I give it to the wind.*] First edition. From POPE’S *Odyssey*, v. 440.

*This heavenly scarf beneath thy body bind,
And live ; give all thy terrors to the wind.*

but will not be able to bend it. His faithful dogs howl on his hills; his boars, which he used to pursue, rejoice. Fallen is the arm of battle! the mighty among the valiant is low! Exalt the voice and blow the horn, ye sons of the king of Morven! Let us go back to Swaran, to send the night away on song. Fillan, Oscar, and Ryno, fly over the heath of Lena. Where, Ryno, art thou, young son of fame? Thou art not wont to be the last to answer thy father's voice!"

"Ryno," said Ullin, first of bards, "is with the awful forms of his fathers. With Trathal, king of shields; with Trenmor of mighty deeds. The youth is low, the youth is pale, he lies on Lena's heath!" "Fell the swiftest in the race," said the king, "the first to bend the bow? Thou scarce hast been known to me! why did young Ryno fall? But sleep thou softly on Lena, Fingal shall soon behold thee. Soon shall my voice be heard no more, and my footsteps cease to be seen. The bards will tell of Fingal's name. The stones will talk of me¹³. But, Ry-

¹³ *The stones will talk of me.*] SHAKESPEARE, *Macbeth*. A. ii. S. i.

The very *stones prate* of my whereabouts.

no, thou art low indeed ! thou hast not received thy fame. Ullin, strike the harp for Ryno ; tell what the chief would have been. Farewell, thou first in every field ! No more shall I direct thy dart ! Thou that hast been so fair ! I behold thee not. Farewell." The tear is on the cheek of the king, for terrible was his son in war. His son ! that was like a beam of fire by night on a hill ; when the forests sink down in its course ¹⁴, and the traveller trembles at the sound !

"These imitations were the involuntary and almost imperceptible escapes of a mind seasoned with English poetry." WARTON'S Enquiry into the Authenticity of Rowley's Poems.

¹⁴ *His son—like a beam of fire by night on the hill—when the forests sink down in its course.*] "But the winds drive it beyond the steep : It *sinks* from sight, and darkness prevails." Added in the improved edition, 1773. VIRGIL, *Æn.* x. 404.

Ac velut optato, *ventis* æstate coortis,
Dispersa immittit *silvis* incendia pastor :
Correptis subito mediis, extenditur una
Horrida per latos acies Volcania campos.

Around the *forest* flies the furious blast,
And all the leafy nations *sink at last*.

DRYDEN.

"Not so loud is the sound of flame, when rushing wide through the *mountain groves* ; When all the *forests sink*, resounding, beneath its rage." MACPHERSON'S *Homer*, ii. 66.

As young Pallas, in his triumph, is compared to a shepherd setting the woods on fire, Ryno is described as a beam of fire by

But the winds drive it beyond the steep. It sinks from sight, and darkness prevails.

“Whose fame is in that dark-green tomb,” begun the king of generous shells? “Four stones with their heads of moss stand there! They mark the narrow house of death. Near it let Ryno rest. A neighbour to the brave let him lie. Some chief of fame is here, to fly, with my son, on clouds. O Ullin, raise the songs of old. Awake their memory in their tomb. If in the field, they never fled, my son shall rest by their side. He shall rest, far distant from Morven, on Lena’s resounding plains!”

“Here,” said the bard of song, “here rest night on the hill, when the forests are consumed in its course, and the traveller, Virgil’s shepherd, trembles at the sound. To adapt the comparison, however, both to the triumph and to the death of Ryno, the beam of fire in the woods, by an incongruous addition, is converted, in the improved edition, into a meteor which the winds drive beyond the steep; (*optato ventis æstate coortis*;) as if the forest could sink down before a meteor, or sudden darkness prevail, while the forests were “burning around.” But the death of Ryno was altogether an afterthought, to introduce the fragment of Lamderg as an episode; nor could the genuine Ossian, in an epic poem upon a battle at which he was present in person, have forgotten to describe how his brother fought, or by whom he fell, or to mention a single circumstance of his prowess, or of his death.

the first of heroes. Silent is Lamderg¹⁵ in this place: dumb is Ullin, king of swords: And who, soft smiling from her cloud, shews me her face of cloud? Why, daughter, why so pale art

¹⁵ Lamh-dearg signifies *bloody-hand*. Gelchossa, *white-legged* Tuathal, (*Teacht mhar, the surly (but fortunate man, Fragments.)*) Ullfadda, *Long-beard*. Ferchios, *the conqueror of men*. MACPHERSON.

In Toland's History of the Druids, "The druid O'Murnin inhabits (in the vulgar opinion) the hill of Craig-a-vany in Inisoen; Aunius in Benauny, from him so called, in the county of Londonderry; and *Gealcossa* in *Gealcossa's* mount (*Cnuc na Gealcossaigh*) in Inisoen aforesaid, in the county of Donegal. This last was a druidess, and her name is of the Homeric strain, signifying *white-legged*. On this hill is her *grave*, and hard by is her *temple*; being a sort of *diminutive Stonehenge*." Hist. Druids, 23. "The next promoter of letters was king *Tuathal* (*Tuathal Teacht-mhar*, Toland's note), whose surname is rendered *Bona-ventura*," (the *surly but fortunate man*), "though not so properly. The third most magnificent patron of literature, was king Cormac, surnamed (*Ulfadda*) *long-beard*." Id. 50. "Lugadius Mac-Con, run through the body with a lance by the druid Ferchisus. (Ferchios in Toland's note), and from the very name of *Lamderg* (*Lamh-dearg, or bloody-hand*), we learn what sort of a man this druid was, who, by the vulgar, is still supposed to live enchanted in the mountain between Bunncranach and Fathan, in the county of Donegal." Id. 55---6.

Here, then, the names and explanations are transcribed verbatim from Toland's History of the Druids, the great source of Celtic Antiquities, which has furnished all the learning, and almost all the fictions that have appeared upon the subject. The *temple* of Gelchossa, the *druidess*, Toland's diminutive

thou, first of the maids of Cromla? Dost thou sleep with the foes in battle, white-bosomed daughter of Tuathal? Thou hast been the love of thousands, but Lamderg was thy love. He

Stonchenge, is converted into the *circle of stones*, “the *pale* of the *druidical temple*” of Allad the *druid*: Gelchossa’s grave hard by the temple, is turned into the tomb of Lamderg, the common burial-place, in which Ullin, Lamderg, Gelchossa, Ryno, and Orla, are all interred; and Fingal, who knew when he landed, that it was Lamderg’s grave (*supra*, p. 102.), asks, by a lapse of memory incidental to fiction, whose fame is in those five grey stones?

The discovery of Gelchossa’s mount, in Iniseon, and of Lamderg’s mountain between Buncranach and Fathan, in the county of Donnegal, ascertains the intended scene of Fingal; viz. the peninsula of Iniseon between Loch Swilly and Loch Foyle. But Moilena, where the battles are fought upon landing, is a part of King’s county, in the province of Leinster; and an inland district, in the very centre of Ireland, is transferred to the shores of the most northern extremity of the province of Ulster. The cause of this strange mistake was explained in the *Journal des Sçavans*, 1764. “La bruyere ou la plaine de Lena, que M. Macpherson a choisie pour le theatre de l’action de son Poem de Fingal, il a emprunte d’une relation historique qui se trouve parmi les anciens monumens d’Irland, sous le titre de *Cath Maigh Lena*, c’est a dire, *l’Histoire de la bataille de la champ de Lena*. Memoire de M. de C. (onar.) au sujet des Poems de M. Macpherson.”---*Journal des Sçavans*, Dec. 1764. The battle of Moilena is an Irish romance, which Macpherson had certainly seen, and in searching the map for the situation of Gelchossa’s mount, and Lamderg’s hill, on the west side of Iniseon, as described by Toland, he probably mistook Maline, at the extremity of the peninsula, for the field of Moilena.

came to Tura's mossy towers, and, striking with his dark buckler spoke : " Where is Gelchossa, my love, the daughter of the noble Tuathal ? I left her in the hall of Tura ¹⁶, when I fought with great Ulfada. Return soon, O Lamderg, she said, for here I sit in grief. Her white breast rose with sighs. Her cheek was wet with tears. But I see her not coming to meet me ; to sooth my soul after war. Silent is the hall of my joy ! I hear not the voice of the bard. Bran ¹⁷ does

¹⁶ *I left her in the hall of Tura.*] In the hall of *Selma*, First edition. In the hall of *the plain*, Fragments. In adapting the fragment to the epic poem, a name was wanting for the hall of the plain ; and, like *Loda*, in the preceding episode of Orla chief of streamy *Loda*, *Selma* was adopted as the first that occurred. In the corrected edition of 1773, the impropriety of placing *Selma* in Ulster was first discovered ; and the names were changed, throughout the two episodes, into *Tura* and *Lota*.

¹⁷ Bran is a common name of grey-hounds to this day. It is a custom in the north of Scotland, to give the names of the heroes mentioned in this poem, to their dogs ; a proof that they are familiar to the ear, and their fame generally known. MAC-PHERSON.

Bran, (black, a raven) was the name of Fingal's dog, on whom there is a poem among the Irish ballads. A dog chained at the gate, is perhaps a modern idea ; but the hound was a favourite image in our author's earliest poem, the *Hunter*.

Thus in the lowly hut the faithful hound,
With tender twigs of yielding ozier bound,

not shake his chains at the gate, glad at the coming of Lamderg. Where is Gelchossa, my love, the mild daughter of the generous Tualthal !”

“ Lamderg !” says Ferchios son of Aidon, “ Gelchossa moves stately on Cromla. She and the maids of the bow pursue the flying deer !” “ Ferchios !” replied the chief of Cromla, “ no noise meets the ear of Lamderg ! No sound is in the woods of Lena. No deer fly in my sight. No panting dog pursues. I see not Gelchossa, my love, fair as the full moon setting on the hills. Go, Ferchios, go to Allad¹⁸, the grey-haired son of the rock. His dwelling is in the

When far without he hears the blasting horns,
Leaps here and there, and in his bondage burns ;
But once let loose, he snuffs the gelid wind,
And leaves the winged blast to puff behind.

¹⁸ Allad is a druid : he is called the son of the rock, from his dwelling in a cave ; and the circle of stones here mentioned is the pale of the druidical temple. He is here consulted as one who had a supernatural knowledge of things ; from the druids, no doubt, came the ridiculous notion of the second sight, which prevailed in the Highland and Isles. MACPHERSON.

The circle of stones, the pale of Allad's Druidical temple, is evidently Toland's diminutive Stonehenge ; the temple of Gelchossa, the white-legged druidess. *Allad*, *Ullin*, and *Aidon*, are also from Toland, 28. 66.

circle of stones. He may know of the bright Gelchossa !”

The son of Aidon went. He spoke to the ear of age. “Allad ! dweller of rocks : thou that tremblest alone ! what saw thine eyes of age ?” “I saw,” answered Allad the old, “Ullin the son of Cairbar. He came, in darkness, from Cromla. He hummed a surly song, like a blast in a leafless wood. He entered the hall of Tura. “Lamderg,” he said, “most dreadful of men, fight or yield to Ullin.” “Lamderg,” replied Gelchossa, “the son of battle, is not here. He fights Ulfada, mighty chief. He is not here, thou first of men ! but Lamderg never yields. He will fight the son of Cairbar !” “Lovely art thou,” said terrible Ullin, “daughter of the generous Tuathal. I carry thee to Cairbar’s halls. The valiant shall have Gelchossa. Three days I remain on Cromla, to wait that son of battle, Lamderg. On the fourth Gelchossa is mine ; if the mighty Lamderg flies.”

“Allad !” said the chief of Cromla, “peace to thy dreams in the cave. Ferchios, sound the horn of Lamderg, that Ullin may hear in his halls.” Lamderg, like a roaring storm, ascended

the hill from Tura. He hummed a surly song as he went, like the noise of a falling stream. He darkly stood upon the hill, like a cloud varying its form to the wind. He rolled a stone, the sign of war. Ullin heard in Cairbar's hall. The hero heard, with joy, his foe. He took his father's spear. A smile brightens his dark-brown cheek, as he places his sword by his side. The dagger glittered in his hand. He whistled as he went ¹⁹.

Gelchossa saw the silent chief, as a wreath of mist ascending the hill. She struck her white and heaving breast ; and silent, tearful, feared for Lamderg. " Cairbar, hoary chief of shells," said the maid of the tender hand, " I must bend the bow on Cromla. I see the dark-brown hinds !" She hasted up the hill. In vain ! the gloomy heroes fought. Why should I tell to Selma's king, how wrathful heroes fight ? Fierce Ullin fell. Young Lamderg came, all pale to the daughter of the generous Tuathal ! " What blood, my love, she trembling said ? What blood runs down my warrior's side ?" " It is Ullin's

¹⁹ *He whistled as he went.*] DRYDEN.

And *whistled as he went* for want of thought.

blood," the chief replied, " thou fairer than the snow ! Gelchossa, let me rest here a little while !" The mighty Lamderg died ! " And sleepest thou so soon on earth, O chief of shady Tura ?" Three days she mourned beside her love. The hunters found her cold. They raised this tomb above the three. Thy son, O king of Morven, may rest here with heroes !

" And here my son shall rest," said Fingal. " The voice of their fame is in mine ears. Fillan and Fergus ! bring hither Orla ; the pale youth of the stream of Lota ! Not unequalled shall Ryno lie in earth, when Orla is by his side. Weep, ye daughters of Morven ! ye maids of the streamy Lota weep ! Like a tree they grew on the hills. They have fallen like the oak of the desert ; when it lies across a stream, and withers in the wind ²⁰. Oscar ! chief of every

²⁰ *They have fallen, like the oak of the desert, when it lies across a stream, and withers in the wind.*] *Iliad*, xvi. 483. quoted by Macpherson.

ἩΡΙΑΝΕ δ' ὥς ὅτε τις ΔΡΥΣ ἠρίπτεν.

POPE's *Iliad*, xvii. 62.

When lo a *whirlwind* from high heaven invades
The tender plant, and *withers* all its shades.
It lies uprooted from its genial bed,
A lovely ruin, now defaced and dead.

youth ! thou seest how they have fallen. Be thou like them, on earth renowned. Like them the song of bards. Terrible were their forms in battle ; but calm was Ryno in the days of peace. He was like the bow of the shower seen far distant on the stream ; when the sun is setting on Mora ²¹ ; when silence dwells on the hill of deer. Rest, youngest of my sons ! rest, O Ryno, on Lena. We too shall be no more. Warriors one day must fall !”

Such was thy grief, thou king of swords, when Ryno lay on earth. What must the grief of Ossian be, for thou thyself art gone ! I hear not thy distant voice on Cona. My eyes perceive thee not. Often forlorn and dark I sit at thy tomb ; and feel it with my hands. When I think I hear thy voice, it is but the passing blast. Fingal has long since fallen asleep, the ruler of the war !

Then Gaul and Ossian sat with Swaran, on the soft green banks of Lubar. I touched the

²¹ *Like the bow of the shower—when the sun is setting on Mora.] Par. Lost, iv. 150.*

On which the *sun* more glad impressed his beams
Than in fair *evening* cloud, or *humid bow*,
When God hath *showered* the earth.

harp to please the king. But gloomy was his brow. He rolled his red eyes towards Lena. The hero mourned his host. I raised mine eyes to Cromla's brow. I saw the son of generous Semo. Sad and slow he retired, from his hill, towards the lonely cave of Tura. He saw Fingal victorious, and mixed his joy with grief. The sun is bright on his armour. Connal slowly strode behind. They sunk behind the hill, like two pillars of the fire of night : when winds pursue them over the mountain, and the flaming heath resounds ! Beside a stream of roaring foam his cave is in a rock. One tree bends above it. The rushing winds echo against its sides ²². Here rests the chief of Erin, the son of generous Semo. His thoughts are on the battles he lost. The tear is on his cheek. He mourned the departure of his fame, that fled like the mist of

²² Beside a stream of roaring foam, his cave is in a rock. One tree bends above it. The rushing winds echo against its sides.] From the *Cave*, a poem by Macpherson.

Behold it opens to my sight,

Dark in the rock, beside the flood,

Dry fern above obstructs the sight,

The winds above it move the woods.—

One tree bends o'er the naked walls.

Cona ²³. O Bragela, thou art too far remote, to cheer the soul of the hero. But let him see thy bright form in his mind : that his thoughts may return to the lonely sun-beam of his love !

Who comes with the locks of age ? It is the son of songs. “ Hail, Carril of other times ! Thy voice is like the harp in the halls of Tura. Thy words are pleasant as the shower, which falls on the sunny field ²⁴. Carril of the times of old, why comest thou from the son of the generous Semo ? ”

“ Ossian, king of swords,” replied the bard, “ Thou best can raise the song. Long hast thou been known to Carril, thou ruler of war ! Often have I touched the harp to lovely Evirallin. Thou too hast often joined my voice, in Branno’s hall of generous shells. And often, amidst our voices, was heard the mildest Evirallin.

²³ *The departure of his fame, that fled like the mist of Cona.*] Repeated from above, iv. 37. “ And our name shall be forgotten in time. And no man shall have our works in remembrance. And our life shall pass away, as a mist that is driven away by the beams of the sun.” *Wisdom of Solomon*, ii. 4.

²⁴ *Thy words are pleasant as the shower that falls on the sunny field.*] Another repetition ; “ My speech shall distill as the dew—and as the showers upon the grass.” *Deut.* xxxii. 2.

One day she sung of Cormac's fall, the youth, who died for her love. I saw the tears on her cheek, and on thine, thou chief of men ! Her soul was touched for the unhappy, though she loved him not. How fair among a thousand maids, was the daughter of generous Branno !"

"Bring not, Carril," I replied, "bring not her memory to my mind. My soul must melt at the remembrance. My eyes must have their tears. Pale in the earth is she, the softly-blushing fair of my love ! But sit thou on the heath, O bard, and let us hear thy voice. It is pleasant as the gale of spring, that sighs on the hunter's ear²⁵; when he awakens from dreams of

²⁵ *Let us hear thy voice. It is pleasant as the gale of spring, that sighs on the hunter's ear.*] Why compared with the gale of spring, when the hunter has heard the music of the spirits of the hill ; instead of being directly compared with the music itself which the hunter had heard ? The music might resemble the voice of Carril, but the gale of spring could hardly be pleasant on awaking from dreams of joy. The explanation of the incongruity is this, that the whole simile is a concealed and happy imitation of the most select passages, respecting music, in Shakspeare and Milton.

"It is *pleasant as the gale of spring, that sighs on the hunter's ear, when he awakens from dreams of joy.*" *Twelfth Night*, A. i. S. 1.

O, it came o'er my ear like *the sweet south,*
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odours.

joy, and has heard the music of the spirits of the hill !”

Merchant of Venice, A. iii. S. 2.

Such it is,

As are those *dulcet* sounds at break of day,
That *creep* into the *dreaming* bride-groom's ear,
And *summon* him to marriage.

“And has *heard* the *music* of the *spirits* of the *hill*.” *Par. Lost*,
v. 544.

Thy words

Attentive, and with *more delighted ear*,
Divine instructor, *I have heard*, than when
Cherubic songs by night from neighbouring hills
Æreal *music* send.

And from the combination of these passages, the voice of Car-ril is compared, not directly to the music of spirits, but to the gale of spring, that *breathes*, or *sighs* upon the hunter's ear, when he awakens, with dulcet sounds, like the *dreaming* bride-groom, from *dreams* of joy, and has heard the ærial *music* of the spirits of the hills. *Supra*, i. 60.

FINGAL,
AN
EPIC POEM;
BOOK VI.

ARGUMENT TO BOOK VI.

NIGHT comes on. Fingal gives a feast to his army, at which Swaran is present. The king commands Ullin, his bard, to give the *song of peace*; a custom always observed at the end of a war. Ullin relates the actions of Trenmor, great grandfather to Fingal, in Scandinavia, and his marriage with Inibaca, the daughter of a king of Lochlin, who was ancestor to Swaran; which consideration, together with his being brother to Agandecca, with whom Fingal was in love in his youth, induced the king to release him, and permit him to return, with the remains of his army, into Lochlin, upon his promise of never returning to Ireland, in a hostile manner. The night is spent in settling Swaran's departure, in songs of bards, and in a conversation, in which the story of Grumal is introduced by Fingal. Morning comes. Swaran departs; Fingal goes on a hunting party, and finding Cuthullin in the cave of Tura, comforts him, and sets sail, the next day, for Scotland; which concludes the poem. MACPHERSON.

FIN G A L.

BOOK VI.

THE clouds of night come rolling down. Darkness rests on the steep of Cromla. The stars of the north arise over the rolling of Erin's waves : they shew their heads of fire, through the flying mist of heaven ¹. A distant wind roars in the

¹ *They shew their heads of fire, through the flying mist of heaven.*] POPE'S *Iliad*, ix. 83.

As the red *star* now *shews* her sanguine *fires*,
Through the dark *clouds*, and now in night retires.

Highlander, i. 143.

Thus on a night when rattling tempests war,
Through broken *clouds* appears a blazing *star*,
Now veils its *head*, now rushes on the sight,
And shoots a livid horror through the night.

But the stars of the north, (in the Five Bards, the starry plough of the north, or Charles-wain) rise over the rolling of Erin's waves, where the arctic stars neither rise nor set.

wood. Silent and dark is the plain of death ! Still on the dusky Lena arose in my ears the voice of Carril. He sung of the friends of our youth ; the days of former years ! when we met on the banks of Lego : when we sent round the joy of the shell. Cromla answered to his voice. The ghosts of those he sung came in their rustling winds. They were seen to bend with joy, towards the sound of their praise !

Be thy soul blest, O Carril, in the midst of thy eddying winds. O that thou wouldst come to my hall, when I am alone by night ! And thou dost come, my friend. I hear often thy light hand on my harp ; when it hangs, on the distant wall, and the feeble sound touches my ear. Why dost thou not speak to me in my grief, and tell when I shall behold my friends ? But thou passest away in thy murmuring blast ; the wind whistles through the grey hair of Ossian !

Now, on the side of Mora, the heroes gathered to the feast. A thousand aged oaks are burning to the wind. The strength of the shells goes round. The souls of warriors brighten with joy². But the king of Lochlin is silent.

² *The strength of the shells goes round. The souls of warriors brighten with joy.*] MACPHERSON'S *Hunter*.

Sorrow reddens in the eyes of his pride. He often turned toward Lena. He remembered that he fell. Fingal leaned on the shield of his fathers. His grey locks slowly waved on the wind,

The feast renewed, *goes round* the sparkling bowl,
And temperate draughts *revive* the drooping soul——
And *Gallia's nectar* sparkles in the bowl.

Highlander, v. 314.

Thus in the strain the bards impetuous roll,
And quaff the *generous spirit* of the bowl.

The ancient Celtæ brewed beer, and they were no strangers to mead. Several ancient poems mention wax-lights and wine as common in the halls of Fingal. The Caledonians, in their frequent incursions to the province, might become acquainted with those conveniences of life, and introduce them into their own country, among the booty which they carried from South Britain. MACPHERSON.

In the first edition, “By the strength of shells, is meant, the liquor which the heroes drunk : of what kind it was, *cannot be ascertained* at this distance of time. The translator has met with several ancient poems that mention wax-lights.” &c. Whitaker, however, in his history of Manchester, observed, that “Mr Macpherson is inclined to think that the Caledonians *generally drank wine* in the time of Fingal. But this is utterly incredible, and a subsequent passage, *The blue water trembles on its stars, and seems to be sparkling wine* ;—sufficiently proves the Caledonians to have been acquainted with wine, but to have *generally* used a different liquor. *Curmi*, the British word for ale, may signify *blue water* ; *Curm*, meaning *blue*, and *Ui*, water ; and *Curme* is now the Highland word for a great feast. This, therefore, *was undoubtedly* the word in the original ; and the translator, not adverting perhaps to the particular meaning

and glittered to the beam of night. He saw the grief of Swaran, and spoke to the first of bards.

“ Raise, Ullin, raise the song of peace. O sooth my soul from war. Let mine ear forget, in the sound, the dismal noise of arms. Let a hundred harps be near to gladden the king of Lochlin. He must depart from us with joy. None ever went sad from Fingal. Oscar ! the

of his author, *has put down* the one signification for the other.”
i. 209.

In consequence of this dogmatical assurance, that the translator *must* have mistaken ale, *curmi*, in the original, for *blue water*, we are informed, in the improved edition, that “ the ancient Celtæ brewed beer, and were no strangers to mead.” Sed non ex quovis ligno. *Curwi*, the Welsh, and *Cuirm*, the old Irish for ale, are the Low Latin *Curmen*, the Greek *Κεγμα*, but *Gorm*, not *Cuirm*, is the Farse for *blue* ; and the Highlanders are still strangers to mead. Without trade or agriculture, cattle or corn, they could not have had, in the savage state, either ale, or wine, or whisky ; of which *Usquebach*, is a translation of *Aquavita*, *lean*, a corruption of *ale*, *fion* of *vinum* ; and the strength of shells was employed ambiguously for “ Gallia’s nectar,” “ the generous spirit of the bowl,” without ascertaining what the heroes drank. As to the ancient poems that mention wax-lights and wine in the halls of Fingal, these are no other than the Irish ballad of Magnus : “ From night to day we seldom wanted music, feasting, saffron, *wine*, and *wax* ;” which, in the fourteenth century, were familiar at least to the Irish priests.

lightening of my sword is against the strong in fight. Peaceful, it lies by my side when warriors yield in war."

"Trenmor³," said the mouth of songs, "lived in the days of other years. He bounded over the waves of the north: companion of the storm! The high rocks of the land of Lochlin; its groves of murmuring sounds appeared to the hero through mist: he bound his white-bosomed sails. Trenmor pursued the boar, that roared through the woods of Gormal. Many had fled from its presence: but it rolled in death on the spear of Trenmor. Three chiefs, who beheld the deed, told of the mighty stranger. They told that he stood, like a pillar of fire, in the bright arms of his valour. The king of Lochlin prepared the feast. He called the blooming Trenmor. Three days he feasted at Gormal's windy towers; and received his choice in the combat. The land of Lochlin had no

³ Trenmor was great grandfather to Fingal. The story is introduced to facilitate the dismissal of Swaran. MACPHERSON.

Trenmor, the grandfather of Fingal, according to this episode, had no other object in his voyage to Lochlin, than to hunt the boar on his arrival there.

hero, that yielded not to Trenmor. The shell of joy went round with songs, in praise of the king of Morven. He that came over the waves, the first of mighty men !

Now when the fourth grey morn arose, the hero launched his ship. He walked along the silent shore, and called for the rushing wind : For loud and distant he heard the blast murmuring behind the groves ⁴. Covered over with arms of steel, a son of the woody Gormal appeared. Red was his cheek and fair his hair. His skin like the snow of Morven. Mild rolled his blue and smiling eye, when he spoke to the king of swords.

“ Stay, Trenmor, stay thou first of men, thou hast not conquered Lonval’s son. My sword has often met the brave. The wise shun the strength of my bow.” “ Thou fair-haired youth,” Trenmor replied, “ I will not fight with

⁴ For loud and distant he heard the blast murmuring behind the grove.] *Hardyknute.*

Loud and chill blew the westlin wind.

Æn. x. 97.

*Ceu flamina prima,
Cum deprensa fremunt sylvis, et cæca volutant
Murmura, venturos nautis prodentia ventos.*

Louval's son. Thine arm is feeble, sun-beam of youth. Retire to Gormal's dark-brown hinds." "But I will retire," replied the youth, "with the sword of Trenmor; and exult in the sound of my fame. The virgins shall gather with smiles, around him who conquered mighty Trenmor. They shall sigh with the sighs of love, and admire the length of thy spear; when I shall carry it among thousands; when I lift the glittering point to the sun."

"Thou shalt never carry my spear," said the angry king of Morven. "Thy mother shall find thee pale on the shore; and, looking over the dark-blue deep, see the sails of him that slew her son!" "I will not lift the spear," replied the youth, "my arm is not strong with years. But, with the feathered dart, I have learned to pierce a distant foe. Throw down that heavy mail of steel. Trenmor is covered from death. I first, will lay my mail on earth. Throw now thy dart, thou king of Morven!" He saw the heaving of her breast. It was the sister of the king. She had seen him in the hall; and loved his face of youth. The spear dropt from the hand of Trenmor: he bent his red cheek to the

ground. She was to him a beam of light that meets the sons of the cave ; when they revisit the fields of the sun⁵, and bend their aching eyes !

“ Chief of the windy Morven,” begun the

⁵ *To him a beam of light that meets the sons of the cave, when they revisit the fields of the sun.*] From THOMSON’S description of the Samoieds beyond the Oby. *Winter.*

And half enlightened by the distant *sun*——

Here human nature wears its rudest form.

Deep from the piercing season, *sunk* in *caves*,

Here by dull fires, and with unjoyous cheer,

They waste the tedious gloom——

Till morn at length, her roses dropping all,

Sheds a long *twilight brightening* o’er the *fields*,

And calls the quivered savage to the chace.

The sons of the cave are again introduced in a poem, quoted both in Erse and English, as a proof that the Highlanders of old did not worship the sun.

“ Seized amidst the shock of armies, Clugar struggled in all his thongs, and rolled in wrath his red eyes. Thus hovering over the black waves of the North, when Grian-ais” (the spirit of the sun) “sleeps, wrapt in his cloud, a sudden frost comes on all his wings. He struggles, he loudly roars. Wide over the broad regions of snow is heard a voice. His large red eyes flame through the dusky evening : The *Cruglians* shrink to their *caves*.” Macpherson’s *Introduct. to the Hist. of Britain*, 225.

The ghost of Crugal, in the second book, has furnished a name for the Cruglians : even Clugar is the same name with the letters transposed ; and we are gravely told, that “ the com-

maid of the arms of snow, “ Let me rest in thy bounding ship, far from the love of Corlo. For he, like the thunder of the desert, is terrible to Inibaca. He loves me in the gloom of pride. He shakes ten thousand spears !” “ Rest thou in peace,” said the mighty Trenmor, “ Rest behind the shield of my fathers. I will not fly from the chief, though he shakes ten thousand spears !” Three days he waited on the shore. He sent his horn abroad. He called Corlo to battle, from all his echoing hills. But Corlo came not to battle. The king of Lochlin descends from his hall. He feasted on the roaring shore. He gave the maid to Trenmor !

“ King of Lochlin,” said Fingal, “ thy blood flows in the veins of thy foe. Our fathers met in battle, because they loved the strife of spears. But often did they feast in the hall : and send round the joy of the shell. Let thy face brighten with gladness, and thine ear delight in the harp.

position of this poem, is placed before the introduction of Christianity into North Britain,” and that “ the subject of the piece is a war between two Scandinavian chiefs ;” of which the only memorial is this traditionary poem, preserved since the fifth century, in the Highlands of Scotland. *Id.*

Dreadful as the storm of thine ocean, thou hast poured thy valour forth; thy voice has been like the voice of thousands when they engage in war⁶. Raise, to-morrow, raise thy white sails to the wind, thou brother of Agandecca! Bright as the beam of noon, she comes on my mournful soul. I have seen thy tears for the fair one. I spared thee in the halls of Starno; when my sword was red with slaughter: when my eye was full of tears for the maid. Or dost thou chuse the fight? The combat which thy fathers gave to Trenmor is thine! that thou mayest depart renowned, like the sun setting in the west⁷!”

⁶ *Thy voice has been like the voice of thousands, when they engage in battle.*] First edit. *Iliad*, v. 860. xiv. 147.

Μέγ' ΑΥΣΕΝ,——

“Οσσον τ’ ἑΝΝΕΑΧΙΑΟΙ ἑΠΙΑΨΧΟΝ, ἢ ΔΕΚΑΧΙΛΟΙ
Ἀνέρες ἐν ΠΟΛΕΜΩ, εἰδὼς ΞΥΝΑΓΟΝΤΕΣ Ἀγῆος”

Loud, as the shout *encountering armies* yield,
When *twice ten thousand* shake the labouring field,
Such was the *voice*, and such the thundering sound,
Of him whose trident rends the solid ground.

Pope.

⁷ *That thou mayest depart renowned, like the sun setting in the west.*] From BLAIR'S *Grave*.

By unperceived degrees he wears away,
Yet, like the *sun*, seems *larger* at his *setting*.

“ King of the race of Morven,” said the chief of resounding Lochlin ! “ never will Swaran fight with thee ⁸, first of a thousand heroes ! I have seen thee in the halls of Starno : few were thy years beyond my own. When shall I, I said to my soul, lift the spear like the noble Fingal ? We have fought heretofore, O warrior, on the side of the shaggy Malmor ; after my waves had carried me to thy halls, and the feast of a thousand shells was spread. Let the bards send his name who overcame to future years, for noble was the strife of Malmor ! But many of the ships of Lochlin have lost their youths on Lena. Take these, thou king of Morven, and be the friend of Swaran ! When thy sons shall come to Gormal, the feast of shells shall be spread, and the combat offered on the vale.”

“ Nor ship,” replied the king, “ shall Fingal take, nor land of many hills. The desert is

⁸ *Never will Swaran fight with thee.*] From the ballad of Magnus, in which a renewal of the battle is offered and refused. But the anachronism of the ballad, in rendering Magnus Bare-foot, contemporary with Fingal, is not greater than that of the epic poem, in ascribing tournaments and the combats of chivalry to the supposed period of Fingal and Trenmor.

enough to me, with all its deer and woods. Rise on thy waves again, thou noble friend of Agandecca. Spread thy white sails to the beam of the morning; return to the echoing hills of Gormal." "Blest be thy soul, thou king of shells," said Swaran of the dark-brown shield. "In peace thou art the gale of spring. In war the mountain-storm⁹. Take now my hand in friendship, king of echoing Selma! Let thy bards mourn those who fell. Let Erin give the sons of Lochlin to earth. Raise high the mossy stones of their fame: that the children of the north hereafter may behold the place where their fathers fought¹⁰. The hunter may say, when he

⁹ *In peace thou art the gale of spring. In war the mountain storm.*] "The gale that moves the grass:" *Supra*, iii. ²⁶. From SHAKESPEARE'S *Cymbeline*, iv. 2.

They are as *gentle*

As *zephyrs*, blowing below the violet,
Not wagging his sweet head; and yet as *rough*,
Their royal blood enchaffed, as the rud'st wind,
That by the top doth take the *mountain* pine,
• And make him stoop to the vale.

¹⁰ Raise *high the mossy stones of their fame: that the children of the north hereafter may behold the place where their fathers fought.*] Another more direct imitation of Hector's challenge to the Greeks. *Supra*, ii. ⁴³. "The hunter may say, when he leans on a mossy tomb, here Fingal and Swaran fought, the

leans on a mossy tomb, here Fingal and Swaran fought, the heroes of other years. Thus hereafter shall he say, and our fame shall last for ever !”

“Swaran,” said the king of hills, “to-day our fame is greatest. We shall pass away like a dream. No sound will remain in our fields of war. Our tombs will be lost in the heath. The hunter shall not know the place of our rest¹¹. Our names may be heard in song. What avails it, when our strength hath ceased¹²? O Ossian, Carril, and Ullin, you know of heroes that are

heroes of other years. Thus hereafter shall he say, and our fame shall last for ever.” POPE’S Iliad, vii. 97.

The breathless carcase to your navy sent,
Greece on the shore shall raise a monument;
Which when some future mariner surveys,
Wash’d by broad Hellespont’s resounding seas,
Thus shall he say, “A valiant Greek lies here,
“By Hector slain, the mighty man of war.”
The stone shall tell your vanquish’d hero’s name,
And distant ages learn the victor’s fame.

¹¹ *We shall pass away like a dream.—The hunter shall not know the place of our rest.] He shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found: yea he shall be chased away as a vision of the night. The eye also which saw him shall see him no more; neither shall his place any more behold him. Job, xx. 8, 9.*

¹² *To-day our fame is greatest. Our tombs will be lost in the heath. Our names may be heard in song. What avails it when*

no more. Give us the song of other years. Let the night pass away on the sound, and morning return with joy."

We gave the song to the kings. An hundred harps mixed their sound with our voice. The face of Swaran brightened, like the full moon of heaven, when the clouds vanish away¹³, and leave her calm and broad, in the midst of the sky!

our strength hath ceased.] A frequent sentiment in our author's poetry. In the *Monument* :

*In vain we toil for lasting fame,
Or give to other times our name ;
The bust itself shall soon be gone,
The figure moulder from the stone ;
The plaintive strain, the moving lay,
Like those they mourn, at last decay ;
My name a surer way shall live.*

And in the *Night piece* :

*Go on the stone, inscribe thy name,
And to the marble trust thy fame.
Bid half the mountain form thy tomb,
The wonder of the times to come ;
The mound shall sink, the stone decay,
The sculptured figures wear away.*

¹³ *The face of Swaran brightened like the full moon of heaven, when the clouds vanish away.*] THOMSON'S *Autumn*.

Meanwhile, the moon,
Full orb'd, and breaking through the scattered clouds,
Shews her broad visage in the crimson'd east.
" And leave her calm and broad in the midst of the sky."

“Where, Carril,” said the great Fingal, “Carril of other times ! Where is the son of Semo ? the king of the isle of mist ? has he retired, like the meteor of death, to the dreary cave of Tura ?” “Cuthullin,” said Carril of other times, “lies in the dreary cave of Tura. His hand is on the sword of his strength. His thoughts on the battles he lost. Mournful is the king of spears ; till now unconquered in war. He sends his sword to rest on the side of Fingal : For, like the storm of the desert, thou hast scattered all his foes. Take, O Fingal, the sword of the hero. His fame is departed like mist, when it flies, before the rustling wind, along the brightening vale.”

“No :” replied the king, “Fingal shall never take his sword. His arm is mighty in war ; his fame shall never fail. Many have been overcome in battle ; whose renown arose from their fall. O Swaran, king of resounding woods, give all thy grief away¹⁴. The vanquished, if brave, are

¹⁴ Give all thy grief away.] *Odyssey*, viii. 409.

And live, *give all thy terrors* to the wind.

But the latter part of the expression was transferred to Orla. *Supra*, v. ¹².

renowned. They are like the sun in a cloud, when he hides his face in the south¹⁵, but looks again on the hills of grass !

“ Grumal was a chief of Cona. He sought the battle on every coast. His soul rejoiced in blood. His ear in the din of arms. He poured his warriors on Craca ; Craca’s king met him from his grove : for then, within the circle of Brumo¹⁶, he spoke to the stone of power. Fierce was the battle of the heroes, for the maid of the breast of snow. The fame of the daughter of

¹⁵ *Like the sun in a cloud, when he hides his face in the south.*] *Conditus in nubem. Supra, iv. 33.* THOMSON’S *Winter*.

Faint are his gleams, and ineffectual shoot
His struggling rays, in horizontal lines,
Through the thick air, as clothed in *cloudy* storm,
Weak, wan, and broad, he skirts the *southern* sky.

¹⁶ This passage alludes to the religion of the king of Craca.
MACPHERSON.

It seems, then, that the northern nations had some religion, though the Highlanders had none. But the name of *Brumo* is perhaps familiar to the reader ; as it is no other than the well-known *Brownie* ; a household deity, like Milton’s *lubber-fiend*. And the *stone*, or *circle*, of *Brumo’s* power, may be found in Martin’s Description of the Western Isles. “ They had an universal custom of pouring a cow’s milk upon a *little hill*, or *big stone*, where the spirit called *Brownie* was believed to lodge : This spirit always appeared in the shape of a tall man, having very long *brown* hair.” P. 110. *infra*, n. ¹⁵.

Craca had reached Grumal at the streams of Co-na: he vowed to have the white-bosomed maid, or die on echoing Craca. Three days they strove together, and Grumal on the fourth was bound. Far from his friends they placed him, in the horrid circle of Brumo¹⁷, where often, they said, the ghosts of the dead howled round the stone of their fear¹⁸. But he afterwards shone, like a pillar of the light of heaven. They fell by his mighty hand. Grumal had all his fame!

“Raise, ye bards of other times,” continued the great Fingal, “raise high the praise of heroes: that my soul may settle on their fame; that the mind of Swaran may cease to be sad.” They lay in the heath of Mora¹⁹. The dark

¹⁷ Far from his friends they placed him, in the horrid circle of Brumo.] The second way of consulting the oracle, was by a party of men, who first retired to *solitary places, remote from any house*, and there they singled out one of their number, and wrapped him in a big cow’s hide, which they folded about him; and so left him in this posture all night, until his *invisible friends* relieved him, by giving a proper answer to the question in hand. *Id.*

¹⁸ The ghosts of the dead howled round the stone of their fear.] *Par. Reg.* iv. 422.

Infernal ghosts

Environed thee; some howled, some yelled, some shrieked.

¹⁹ They lay on the heath of Mora.] *Highlander*, v. 17.

winds rustled over the chiefs. A hundred voices, at once, arose : a hundred harps were strung. They sung of other times ; the mighty chiefs of former years ! When now shall I hear the bard ! When rejoice at the fame of my fathers ? The harp is not strung on Morven. The voice of music ascends not on Cona. Dead, with the mighty, is the bard. Fame is in the desert no more ²⁰."

Morning trembles with the beam of the east ; it glimmers on Cromla's side. Over Lena is heard the horn of Swaran. The sons of the ocean gather around. Silent and sad they rise on the wave. The blast of Erin is behind their sails. White, as the mist of Morven, they float along the sea. " Call," said Fingal, " call my dogs, the long-bounding sons of the chace. Call white-

On Grampus night her mantle round us throws :

We *slept on heath* ; the dappled morn arose.

²⁰ *The harp is not strung on Morven. The voice of music ascends not on Cona.---Fame is in the desert no more.*] The *joy of the harp ceaseth*, (Is. xxxv. 8.) The *sound of the harp shall be no more*, (Ezek. xxvi. 13.) The *voice of harpers harping with harps*, (Rev. xiv. 2.) The *voice of the harp shall be heard no more*, (Id. xviii. 22.) These passages are accumulated ; because, without being actually consulted, they were all in the poet's contemplation at the time.

breasted Bran, and the surly strength of Luath! Fillan, and Ryno; but he is not here! My son rests on the bed of death. Fillan and Fergus ²¹! blow the horn, that the joy of the chace may arise; that the deer of Cromla may hear, and start at the lake of roes."

The shrill sound spreads along the wood. The sons of heathy Cromla arise. A thousand dogs fly off at once, grey bounding through the heath. A deer fell by every dog; three by the white-breasted Bran. He brought them, in their flight, to Fingal ²², that the joy of the king might be

²¹ *Fillan and Ryno; but he is not here! My son rests on the bed of death. Fillan and Fergus!*] Blair observes, that this unexpected start of anguish is worthy of the highest tragic poet.

If she come in, she'll sure speak to my wife——

My wife! my wife! what wife? I have no wife.

Othello.

The first instance, perhaps, of such interruption, is in the *Æneid*;

Quos ego : sed motas præstat componere fluctus ;
which is too artificial ever to be seriously admired. But if the aposiopesis in Virgil sinks so low, when compared with Shakespeare's pathetic exclamation; "My wife! my wife! what wife? I have no wife." what shall we say to the cold and studied interruption in Macpherson's *Ossian*?

²² *He brought them, in their flight, to Fingal.*] The poet, forgetting the chace, thought only of the pointer bringing the grouse when shot, to his feet.

great ! One deer fell at the tomb of Ryno. The grief of Fingal returned. He saw how peaceful lay the stone of him, who was the first at the chace ! “ No more shalt thou rise, O my son, to partake of the feast of Cromla. Soon will thy tomb be hid, and the grass grow rank on thy grave. The sons of the feeble shall pass along. They shall not know where the mighty lie.

“ Ossian and Fillan, sons of my strength. Gaul, chief of the blue steel of war ! let us ascend the hill to the cave of Tura. Let us find the chief of the battles of Erin. Are these the walls of Tura ? grey and lonely they rise on the heath. The chief of shells is sad, and the halls are silent and lonely. Come, let us find Cuthullin, and give him all our joy. But is that Cuthullin, O Fillan, or a pillar of smoke on the heath ²³. The wind of Cromla is on my eyes. I distinguish not my friend.”

“ Fingal !” replied the youth, “ it is the son

²³ *But is that Cuthullin, or a pillar of smoke on the heath.]*
Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke ? Song of Solomon, iii. 6.

of Semo ! Gloomy and sad is the hero ! his hand is on his sword. Hail to the son of battle, breaker of the shields !” “Hail to thee,” replied Cuthullin, “hail to all the sons of Morven ! Delightful is thy presence, O Fingal, it is the sun on Cromla ; when the hunter mourns his absence for a season, and sees him between the clouds ²⁴. Thy sons are like stars that attend thy course. They give light in the night. It is not thus thou hast seen me, O Fingal, returning from the wars of thy land : when the kings of the world had fled, and joy returned to the hill of hinds !” “Many are thy words, Cuthullin,” said Connan ²⁵ of small renown. “Thy words are many, son of Semo ; but where are thy deeds in arms ? Why did we come, over ocean, to aid

²⁴ *Delightful is thy presence, O Fingal ! It is the sun on Cromla ; when the hunter mourns his absence for a season, and sees him between the clouds.*] He that ruleth over men must be just :—and he shall be as the *light* of the *morning* when the *sun* riseth, even a morning without *clouds*. II. Sam. xxiii. 3. Blair observes, that this is one of the most regular, and formal comparisons in the sacred books. BLAIR'S *Lectures*, iii. 192.

²⁵ Connan was of the family of Morni. He is mentioned in several other poems, and always appears with the same charac-

thy feeble sword ! Thou flyest to thy cave of grief, and Connan fights thy battles. Resign to me these arms of light. Yield them, thou chief of Erin ! ” “ No hero,” replied the chief, “ ever sought the arms of Cuthullin ; and had a thousand heroes sought them, it were in vain, thou gloomy youth ! I fled not to the cave of grief, till Erin failed at her streams.”

“ Youth of the feeble arm,” said Fingal, “ Connan, cease thy words ! Cuthullin is renowned in battle ; terrible over the world. Often have I heard thy fame, thou stormy chief of Inis-fail. Spread now thy white sails for the isle of mist. See Bragela leaning on her rock. Her tender eye is in tears ; the winds lift her long hair from her heaving breast. She listens to the breeze of night, to hear the voice of thy rowers ; to hear the song of the sea ! the sound of thy distant harp ! ”

ter. The poet passed him over in silence till now, and his behaviour here deserves no better usage. MACPHERSON.

Those other poems in which Connan is mentioned, are the Irish ballads, from which his altercation with Magnus is transferred to Cuthullin.

“Long shall she listen in vain. Cuthullin shall never return ! How can I behold Bragela, to raise the sigh of her breast ? Fingal, I was always victorious in battles of other spears !” “And hereafter thou shalt be victorious,” said Fingal of generous shells. “The fame of Cuthullin shall grow, like the branchy tree of Cromla. Many battles await thee, O chief ! Many shall be the wounds of thy hand ! Bring hither, Oscar, the deer ! Prepare the feast of shells. Let our souls rejoice after danger, and our friends delight in our presence !”

We sat. We feasted. We sung. The soul of Cuthullin rose. The strength of his arm returned. Gladness brightened along his face. Ullin gave the song ; Carril raised the voice. I joined the bards, and sung of battles of the spear. Battles ! where I often fought. Now I fight no more ! The fame of my former deeds is ceased. I sit forlorn at the tombs of my friends !

Thus the night passed away in song. We brought back the morning with joy. Fingal arose on the heath, and shook his glittering spear. He moved first toward the plains of Lena. We followed in all our arms.

“Spread the sail,” said the king, “seize the winds as they pour from Lena.” We rose on the wave with songs. We rushed, with joy, through the foam of the deep ²⁶.

²⁶ *We rushed, with joy, through the foam of the main.*] It is allowed by the best critics, that an epic poem ought to end happily. This rule, in its most material circumstances, is observed by the three most deservedly celebrated epic poets, Homer, Virgil, and Milton; yet, I know not how it happens, the conclusions of their poems throw a melancholy damp on the mind. One leaves his reader at a funeral; another at the untimely death of a hero; and a third at the solitary scenes of an unpeopled world. MACPHERSON. First edit.

According to this curious amphibology, the *Iliad*, the *Æneid*, and *Paradise Lost*, are all less fortunate in their conclusion than *Fingal*, of which the last book, however, containing the feast and the deer chase from the Highlander, is but a feeble addition to the wrestling match with which the ballad concludes.

ON reviewing the epic poem of *Fingal*, it appears that the imitations are so numerous, and at the same time so minute, and so much diversified, that there is no room whatsoever, for the supposition of an accidental coincidence of thought and style. Where the same thoughts are expressed in the same words, and where the application of the image is also similar,

such coincidence forms the strongest mark of imitation which it is possible to conceive. Nor are the imitations merely such as a mind impregnated with classical, and English poetry might insensibly produce. The epic poem as it is styled, is an absolute cento; a composition of scraps; an accumulation of crude, undigested similies, transcribed, with a few exceptions, from Homer, Virgil, and their two translators Pope and Dryden, from Shakspeare, Milton, Thomson, Young, and the English Bible; the stock of books with which the supposed translator retired to the Highlands in quest of epic poems;

And o'er the Celtic roamed the utmost isles.

The imitations, when pointed out, are so gross and obvious, that we are only surprised how they could have imposed upon the world so long. The secret consisted in the measured prose which the translator adopted, and brought to its perfection; and from the novelty of which, the public was unable to recognize its own poetry when clothed in prose sublime, and transformed into bombast. His first heroic poems, the Hunter and the Highlander, written while he “served his apprenticeship, in secret, to the muses,” are almost professed imitations. But when he undertook to produce an epic poem from the original Earse, it was necessary to proceed with the rapidity of translation; to resort to other poets for images; to avoid every allusion to the arts and manners of more refined society; and above all to disguise his imitations, and to conceal the real sources from which his poetry was derived. Similes from beasts of prey were easily avoided, as the common places of heroic poetry; and modern criticism, or the study of Scripture, had taught him that abstract ideas were little known to the earliest writers. Yet in rendering his expressions particular, as in Homer, or in giving his ideas a local relation, as in Scripture, the false refinement of modern imagery prevails throughout: the gale of spring *sighs* like a zephyr on the hunter's ear, and Lochlin's blustering wind *speaks* aloft in all the shrouds. It is ob-

servable that the similes in Fingal, with the exception of the two fawns, the swan, and the whale, from Milton, are almost all derived from inanimate objects; the storms, torrents, waves, vapours, and flames, for which the Iliad was ransacked; nor, till these were exhausted, did the author venture to introduce either the fallen oak or the eagle, which recur so frequently in the subsequent poems. The expedition with which he afterwards translated the Iliad, in three months, could have proceeded only from an early and familiar acquaintance with Homer; but the similes, and other imitations in Ossian, are drawn from such various sources, and are so redundant, that the original passages must have been previously treasured up in a common-place book, instead of being supplied by the author's memory as his occasions required.

Were these imitations to be subtracted, the merit or the difficulty of what little remains, would hardly exceed that of a modern novel. The plot is little else than a prolongation of the ballad of Magnus; with this difference, that the landing is opposed by Cuthullin instead of Fingal, who arrives, according to epic rules, just in time to prevent the destruction of his friends. Each book is furnished with episodes, not arising out of the principal action; but detached fragments, clumsily introduced to prolong the story, as tales of old recited by the bards. The ghosts are as numerous, and as useless, as the episodes. A single ghost sufficed for the Iliad; but, according to our author's mythology, a ghost is inserted in almost every simile of a sun-beam, meteor, storm, or cloud. Achilles is described by Homer not as perfect, but as he received him from fame; and the genuine Ossian would have given us at least the real characters, the persons and manners, of his contemporaries and friends. But the translator's ideal heroes are all perfect, sentimental characters; humane and generous without the least discrimination; pious and moral without religion; refined without an impure intermixture of gallantry; polite and elegant as the chaste off-

spring of modern romance. The men are all brave and stately; the women all fair and lovesick: yet Swaran's heroism is a transcript of Satan's; Calmar's fury of Moloch's; and Gaul and Connal are such faint and distant imitations of Ajax and Ulysses, as Home's *Glenalvon* is of Shakspeare's *Iago*. Oscar is a mere repetition of Alpin the Highlander, as Alpin is an epic representation of Douglas. Fingal himself is wise and prudent as Solomon; strong and terrible as Achilles; early in love like Rinaldo; mild and affectionate like the pious *Æneas*, yet exempt from all that was reprehensible in these characters: and in the first edition the translator exults throughout, at the superior humanity of this faultless monster, who can pity, but never, like Homer's heroes, insult the dead.

The poems, however, have a secret, and to many an irresistible charm, which it is necessary to explain. A continued imitation of the most beautiful passages in classical antiquity, affords a pleasing substitute to the unclassical reader: the perpetual efforts at pathos and sublimity, degenerating into bombast, are adapted to the untutored taste of the multitude; and the most fastidious critic must acknowledge, that the descriptions of rude nature are truly picturesque. The luxuriant descriptions of Thomson are condensed in Ossian; and the most striking images are alone selected, with a felicity that renders the whole scenery so peculiarly impressive. The same powers of description may be discerned in Macpherson's early poetry, with such expansion, indeed, as is exacted by rhyme; and in the romantic wilds and recesses of Badenoch, near the source of the Spey, our author seized and delineated the objects around him, with the strength and precision of a genuine poet. The classical imitations, of which the greatest part of Fingal consists, are adapted so happily, not indeed to the early state of society, but to the local scenery and situation of the Highlands, as to become apparently original; a deception to which the measured prose contributes so largely, that the poems are no

sooner reduced into verse, than the charm is dissolved. When the inflated diction is once removed, we recognize the familiar, and often trite images of modern poetry; yet, surely, in the artful disguise of such numerous imitations, the poems must possess no inconsiderable merit, that have imposed so long upon the world as originals.

COMALA:

A

DRAMATIC POEM.

ARGUMENT.

THIS poem is valuable on account of the light it throws on the antiquity of Ossian's compositions. The Caracul mentioned here is the same with Caracalla, the son of Severus, who, in the year 211, commanded an expedition against the Caledonians. The variety of the measure shews that the poem was originally set to music, and perhaps presented before the chiefs upon solemn occasions. Tradition has handed down the story more complete than it is in the poem. "Comala, the daughter of Sarno, king of Inistore, or Orkney islands, fell in love with Fingal, the son of Comhal, at a feast, to which her father had invited him [Fingal, B. III.], upon his return from Lochlin, after the death of Agandecca. Her passion was so violent, that she followed him, disguised like a youth, who wanted to be employed in his wars. She was soon discovered by Hidallan, the son of Lamor, one of Fingal's heroes, whose love she had slighted some time before. Her romantic passion and beauty recommended her so much to the king, that he had resolved to make her his wife; when news was brought him of Caracul's expedition. He marched to stop the progress of the enemy, and Comala attended him. He left her on a hill, within sight of Caracul's army, when he himself went to battle, having previously promised, if he survived, to return that night." The sequel of the story may be gathered from the poem itself. MACPHERSON.

COMALA :

A

DRAMATIC POEM.

THE PERSONS.

FINGAL.	MELILCOMA,	} <i>Daughters</i> } <i>of Morni.</i>
HIDALLAN.	DERSAGRENA *,	
COMALA.	BARDS.	

DERSAGRENA.

THE chace is over. No noise on Ardven but
the torrent's roar¹ ! Daughter of Morni, come

* Comala, *the maid of the pleasant brow*.---Melilcoma, *soft-rolling eye*.---Dersagrena, *the brightness of a sun-beam*. MAC-PHERSON.

¹

The chace is o'er ;

No noise on Ardven but the torrent's roar.]

The opening of Comala, and many subsequent passages, are in

from Crona's banks. Lay down the bow, and take the harp. Let the night come on with songs, let our joy be great on Ardven.

MELILCOMA.

Night comes apace, thou blue-eyed maid ; grey night grows dim along the plain. I saw a deer at Crona's stream ; a mossy bank he seemed through the gloom ; but soon he bounded away. A meteor played round his branching horns ! the awful faces of other times looked from the clouds ² of Crona !

DERSAGRENA.

These are the signs of Fingal's death. The king of shields is fallen ! and Caracul prevails. Rise, Comala, from thy rock ; daughter of Sarno, rise in tears. The youth of thy love is low ; his ghost is on our hills.

blank verse, and almost in rhyme ; for which the reason is obvious, that it was originally written in English verse.

² *The awful faces of other times looked from the clouds.*] *Supra* Fingal, i. 39. From VIRGIL, *Æn.* ii. 522. Quoted by Macpherson.

*Apparent diræ facies, inimicaque Trojæ
Numina magna deum.*

And the dire *forms* of hostile gods *appear*. DRYDEN.
Imitated in the *Highlander*, iii. 23.

With swords unsheathed the *awful forms* appeared.

MELILCOMA.

There Comala sits forlorn ! two grey dogs
 near shake their rough ears, and catch the fly-
 ing breeze. Her red cheek rests upon her arm ;
 the mountain wind is in her hair. She turns her
 blue eyes towards the fields of his promise.
 Where art thou, O Fingal, the night is gather-
 ing around ?

COMALA.

O Carun ³ of the streams ! why do I behold
 thy waters rolling in blood ? Has the noise of
 the battle been heard ⁴ ; and sleeps the king of
 Morven ? Rise, moon, thou daughter of the
 sky ! look from between thy clouds ; rise, that

³ Carun, or Cara'on, *a winding river*. This river retains still
 the name of Carron, and falls into the Forth some miles to the
 north of Falkirk. MACPHERSON.

Buchanan, deceived by Nennius, has placed the wall of Seve-
 rus between the Forth and the Clyde, with a garrison at Carron,
 where Macpherson, who quotes Buchanan's verses, represents
 Fingal as encountering Caracalla.

Caronis ad undam

Terminus Ausonii signat divortia regni.

⁴ O Carun *of the streams* ! why do I behold *thy waters roll-
 ing in blood* ? *Has the noise of the battle been heard on thy
 banks.*] First edit. From the *Braes of Yarrow*.

Why runs thy stream, O Yarrow, Yarrow red ?

Why on thy braes heard the voice of sorrow ?

I may behold the gleam of his steel, on the field of his promise. Or rather let the meteor, that lights our fathers through the night, come, with its red beam ⁵, to shew me the way to my fallen hero. Who will defend me from sorrow ? Who from the love of Hidallan ? Long shall Comala look before she can behold Fingal in the midst of his host ; bright as the coming forth of the morning, in the cloud of an early shower ⁶.

HIDALLAN ⁷.

Dwell, thou mist of gloomy Crona, dwell on the path of the king. Hide his steps from mine

⁵ *Let the meteor, which lights our fathers through the night, come, with its red beam.*] The Aurora Borealis, which Comala invokes, from Thomson's *Winter*.

By dancing *meteors* then, that ceaseless shake
A *waving blaze* refracted o'er the heavens——
Even in the depth of polar *night* they find
A wondrous day, enough to *light* the chase,
Or *guide* their daring steps to Finland fairs.

“ To *shew* me the way to my fallen hero.”

⁶ *Bright as the coming forth of the morning, in the cloud of an early shower.*] His *going forth* is prepared as the *morning*.—For your goodness is as the *morning cloud*, and as the *early dew* it goeth away. *Hosea*, vi. 3. 4.

⁷ Hidallan was sent by Fingal to give notice to Comala of his return ; he, to revenge himself on her for slighting his love some time before, told her that the king was killed in battle.

eyes, let me remember my friend no more. The bands of battle are scattered, no crowding tread is round the noise of his steel. O Carun, roll thy streams of blood, the chief of the people is low.

COMALA.

Who fell on Carun's sounding banks ⁸, son of the cloudy night? Was he white as the snow of Ardven? Blooming ⁹ as the bow of the shower? Was his hair like the mist of the hill, soft and

He even pretended, that he carried his body from the field to be buried in her presence; and this circumstance makes it probable, that the poem was *presented of old*. MACPHERSON.

The poem itself is an ambitious imitation of the Song of Solomon, with a regular chorus of bards from Caractacus. But when we contemplate such outrageous fictions, as a dramatic poem upon the subject of Caracalla's expedition against the Caledonians, a Celtic drama, performed of old (in the third century) in the Highlands of Scotland, with a Greek chorus as revived by Mason, we are at a loss whether to admire the effrontery of the translator, or the credulous simplicity of the public.

⁸ Who fell on Carun's sounding banks, &c.] *Who* is this that cometh up from the wilderness? *Song of Solomon*, viii. 5. *Who* is this that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the sun, clear as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners? *Id.* vi. 10. But the whole paragraph is a tissue of such imitations.

⁹ Was he white as the snow of Ardven? Blooming, &c.] My beloved is *white* and *ruddy*, the chiefest among ten thousand. *Id.* v. 10.

curling in the day of the sun ¹⁰ ? Was he like the thunder of heaven in battle ? Fleet as the roe of the desert ¹¹ ?

HIDALLAN.

O that I might behold his love, fair-leaning from her rock ! Her red eye dim in tears, her blushing cheek half hid in her locks ! Blow, O gentle breeze, lift thou the heavy locks of the maid, that I may behold her white arm, her lovely cheek in her grief.

COMALA.

And is the son of Comhal fallen, chief of the mournful tale ? The thunder rolls on the hill ! The lightning flies on wings of fire ¹² ! They frighten not Comala ; for Fingal is low. Say,

¹⁰ *Blooming as the bow of the shower ? Was his hair like the mist of Cromla, soft and curling in the day of the sun ?*] As the appearance of the *bow* that is in the cloud, in the *day* of *rain*. Ezek. i. 20. Thy *hair* is as a *flock of goats*, that appear from Mount Gilead. *Song of Solomon*, iv. 1.

¹¹ *Like the thunder of heaven in battle ? Fleet as the roe of the desert ?*] Terrible as an army with banners. *Song of Solomon*, vi. 10. My beloved is like a *roe*, or a young hart on the mountains of Bether. *Id.* ii. 9. 17.

¹² *The lightning flies on wings of fire.*] *Fingal*, iv. 34. Who could ever have mistaken this for the true antique ?

chief of the mournful tale, fell the breaker of the shields ?

HIDALLAN.

The nations are scattered on their hills ! they shall hear the voice of the king no more.

COMALA.

Confusion pursue thee over thy plains ! Ruin overtake thee, thou king of the world¹³ ! Few be thy steps to thy grave ; and let one virgin mourn thee. Let her be like Comala, tearful in the days of her youth. Why hast thou told me, Hidallan, that my hero fell ? I might have hoped a little while his return ; I might have thought I saw him on the distant rock ; a tree might have deceived me with his appearance ; the wind of the hill might have been the sound of his horn in mine ear. O that I were on the banks of Carun ! that my tears might be warm on his cheek !

HIDALLAN.

He lies not on the banks of Carun : on Ard-

¹³ *Confusion pursue thee over thy plains ! Ruin overtake thee, thou king of the world !*] GRAY'S *Bard*, verbatim.

Ruin seize thee, ruthless king !

Confusion on thy banners wait.

ven heroes raise his tomb. Look on them, O moon, from thy clouds ; be thy beam bright on his breast, that Comala may behold him in the light of his armour.

COMALA.

Stop, ye sons of the grave, till I behold my love ! He left me at the chace alone. I knew not that he went to war. He said he would return with the night ; the king of Morven is returned ! Why didst thou not tell me that he would fall, O trembling dweller of the rock. Thou sawest him in the blood of his youth ; but thou didst not tell Comala !

MELILCOMA.

What sound is that on Ardven ? Who is that bright in the vale ? Who comes like the strength of rivers, when their crowded waters glitter to the moon ¹⁴ ?

¹⁴ Who is *that* bright in the vale ? Who comes like the strength of rivers, when their crowded waters glitter to the moon ?] *Who* is this that cometh from Eden, with dyed garments from Bosrah ; this that is *glorious* in his *apparel*, travelling in the greatness of his *strength* ? *Isaiah*, lxiii. 1. Like a *general*, as explained by the commentators, returning with the tokens of *victory* on his garments. But, This that is *glorious* in his *apparel*, is converted, in Fingal's triumphant return, into

COMALA.

Who is it but the foe of Comala, the son of the king of the world ! Ghost of Fingal ! do thou, from thy cloud, direct Comala's bow. Let him fall like the hart of the desert. It is Fingal in the crowd of his ghosts. Why dost thou come, my love, to frighten and please my soul ?

FINGAL.

Raise, ye bards, the song, raise the wars of the streamy Carun ! Caracul has fled from our arms along the fields of his pride. He sets far distant like a meteor, that incloses a spirit of night ¹⁵, when the winds drive it over the heath, and the dark woods are gleaming around. I heard a voice, or was it the breeze of my hills ? Is it the huntress of Ardden, the white-handed

him that is *bright* in the *vale* ; and the greatness of his *strength* is disguised by the *strength* of rivers, when their crowded waters *glitter* to the moon. *Fingal*, v. 11.

¹⁵ *Like a meteor, that incloses a spirit of night.*] *Par. Lost.* ix. 634.

As when a wandering *fire*,
Compact of unctuous vapours, which the *night*
Condenses, and the cold *environs* round,
Kindled through agitation to a *flame*,
Which oft, they say, some *evil spirit* attends,
Hovering, and blazing with delusive light.

daughter of Sarno? Look from thy rocks, my love; let me hear the voice of Comala¹⁶.

COMALA.

Take me to the cave of thy rest, O lovely son of death!

FINGAL.

Come to the cave of my rest. The storm is past, the sun is on our fields. Come to the cave of my rest¹⁷, huntress of echoing Ardven!

COMALA.

He is returned with his fame! I feel the right hand of his wars! But I must rest beside the rock, till my soul returns from my fear! O let the harp be near! raise the song, ye daughters of Morni!

DEBSAGRENA.

Comala has slain three deer on Ardven, the

¹⁶ Look from thy rocks, my love; let me hear the voice of Comala.] O my dove, thou art in the clefts of the rocks, in the secret places of the stairs---let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice. *Song of Solomon*, ii. 14. Quoted by Macpherson, first edit.

¹⁷ The storm is past; the sun is on our fields. Come to the cave of my rest, &c.] The storm is over. First edit. For, lo, the winter is past; the rain is over and gone---arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. *Id.* ii. 13. Quoted by Macpherson.

fire ascends on the rock ; go to the feast of Comala, king of the woody Morven !

FINGAL.

Raise, ye sons of song, the wars of the streamy Carun ; that my white-handed maid may rejoice : while I behold the feast of my love.

BARDS.

Roll, streamy Carun, roll in joy ; the sons of battle fled ! The steed is not seen on our fields ; the wings ¹⁹ of their pride spread in other lands. The sun will now rise in peace, and the shadows descend in joy. The voice of the chace will be heard : the shields hang in the hall. Our delight will be in the war of the ocean, our hands shall grow red in the blood of Lochlin. Roll, streamy Carun, roll in joy ; the sons of battle fled !

MELILCOMA.

Descend ye light mists from high ! Ye moonbeams, lift her soul. Pale lies the maid at the rock ! Comala is no more !

¹⁹ Perhaps the poet alludes to the *Roman eagle*. MACPHERSON.

Highlander, i. 94.

Your sires brought oft the *Roman eagle* down.

FINGAL.

Is the daughter of Sarno dead ; the white-bosomed maid of my love ? Meet me, Comala, on my heaths, when I sit alone at the streams of my hills !

HIDALLAN.

Ceased the voice of the huntress of Ardven ? Why did I trouble the soul of the maid ? When shall I see thee, with joy, in the chace of the dark-brown hinds ?

FINGAL.

Youth of the gloomy brow ! no more shalt thou feast in my halls. Thou shalt not pursue my chace, my foes shall not fall by thy sword. Lead me to the place of her rest, that I may behold her beauty. Pale she lies at the rock, the cold winds lift her hair. Her bow-string sounds in the blast, her arrow was broken in her fall. Raise the praise of the daughter of Sarno ! give her name to the winds of heaven !

BARDS.

See ! meteors gleam around the maid ! See ! moon-beams lift her soul ! Around her, from their clouds, bend the awful faces of her fathers ; Sarno of the gloomy brow ! the red-rolling eyes of

Fidallan ! When shall thy white hand arise ?
 When shall thy voice be heard on our rocks ?
 The maids shall seek thee on the heath, but they
 shall not find thee ¹⁹. Thou shalt come, at times,
 to their dreams, to settle peace in their soul.
 Thy voice shall remain in their ears ; they shall
 think with joy on the dreams of their rest ²⁰.
 Meteors gleam around the maid, and moon-
 beams lift her soul !

¹⁹ *The maids shall seek thee on the heath, but they shall not find thee.*] Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer ; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me. Prov. i. 28.

²⁰ *Thy voice shall remain in their ears ; they shall think with joy on the dreams of their rest.*] *Fingal*, v. ²⁵. *Par. Lost*. viii.

1. Quoted by Macpherson.

The angel ended ; and in Adam's ear
 So charming left his voice, that he awhile
 Thought him still speaking, still stood fix'd to hear ;
 Then, as new-waked, thus gratefully replied.

THE
WAR OF CAROS:
A POEM.

ARGUMENT.

CAROS is probably the noted usurper Carausius, by birth a Menapian, who assumed the purple in the year 284 : and, seizing on Britain, defeated the Emperor Maximian Hercules in several naval engagements ; which gives propriety to his being called, in this poem, *the King of Ships*. He repaired Agricola's wall, in order to obstruct the incursions of the Caledonians ; and when he was employed in that work, it appears he was attacked by a party under the command of Oscar, the son of Ossian. This battle is the foundation of the present poem ; which is addressed to Malvina, the daughter of Toscar. MACPHERSON.

As the expedition of Severus in 208, and the usurpation of Carausius in 286, are the only events extant in the Roman history of Britain, during the third century, the preceding drama contains Fingal's triumphant return from a victory over Caracalla ; and the present poem describes the encounter of Oscar, his grandson, with the usurper Carausius. The only foundation for the poem is the fabulous Nennius, 'of the ninth century, who informs us, that Severus built the Roman wall between the Forth and the Clyde ; but was slain, notwithstanding, with his generals, at York ; and the interpolator of Nennius, who represents Carausius as rebuilding the wall of Severus, which he fortified with seven castles, avenging his defeat and death upon the natives ; erecting Arthur's oven as a monument of his victories, and imposing his own name upon the river Carron. But Macpherson, who consulted only Buchanan, was ignorant that the wall of Severus was built between the Solway and the Tyne ; and that Samuel, whose interpolations have corrupted the text of Nennius, is the sole authority for the battles, or the buildings, of Carausius, the usurper, at the river Carron.

THE
WAR OF CAROS:

A POEM.

BRING, daughter of Toscar, bring the harp !
the light of the song rises in Ossian's soul ! It
is like the field, when darkness covers the hills
around, and the shadow grows slowly on the
plain of the sun ¹. I behold my son, O Malvi-

¹ *The shadow grows slowly on the plain of the sun.*] Light, rising on the soul, like darkness on the sunny field, is not very intelligible ; but the shadow of the mountains, lengthened at eve by the setting sun, proves how much a trite image is disguised and diversified by prose sublime. The original is in Virgil, Ecl. I. 54. The imitations are numerous.

na ! near the mossy rock of Crona². But it is the mist of the desert, tinged with the beam of the west³ ! Lovely is the mist that assumes the form of Oscar ! turn from it, ye winds, when ye roar on the side of Ardven !

Who comes towards my son, with the murmur of a song ? His staff is in his hand, his grey hair loose on the wind. Surly joy lightens his face. He often looks back to Caros. It is Ryno of songs, he that went to view the foe. "What does Caros, king of ships ?" said the son of the now mournful Ossian, "spreads he the wings⁴

Majoresque cadunt altis de montibus umbræ.

For see yon *sunny hills* the *shade* extend.

DRYDEN.

"When darkness covers the *hills* around, and the *shadow* grows slowly over the plain of the *sun*."

² Crona is the name of a small stream which runs into the Carron. MACPHERSON.

³ *It is the mist of the desert, tinged with the beam of the west.*] Who is this that cometh out of the *wilderness*, like *pillars of smoke*, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense. *Song of Solomon*, iv. 9. Quoted by MACPHERSON. The simile itself was introduced in Fingal, vi. ²³.; the peculiar phraseology in Comala ; and the text was quoted in Caros as a parallel passage.

⁴ The Roman eagle. MACPHERSON.

of his pride, bard of the times of old ?” “ He spreads them, Oscar,” replied the bard, “ but it is behind his gathered heap ⁵. He looks over his stones with fear. He beholds thee terrible, as the ghost of night, that rolls the wave to his ships !”

“ Go, thou first of my bards,” says Oscar, “ take the spear of Fingal. Fix a flame on its point. Shake it to the winds of heaven. Bid him, in songs, to advance, and leave the rolling of his wave. Tell to Caros that I long for battle; that my bow is weary of the chace of Cona. Tell him the mighty are not here; and that my arm is young.”

He went with the murmur of songs. Oscar reared his voice on high. It reached his heroes on Ardven, like the noise of a cave; when the sea of Togorma rolls before it: and its trees meet the roaring winds ⁶. They gather round

⁵ Agricola's wall, which Carausius repaired. MACPHERSON.

⁶ *Like the noise of a cave, when the sea of Togorma rolls before it, and its trees meet the roaring winds.*] And, “ He went with the *murmur* of songs.” From *Paradise Lost*, ii. 284. Quoted by Macpherson.

He scarce had finished, when such *murmur* fill'd
Th' assembly, as when *hollow rocks* retain

my son like the streams of the hill ; when, after rain, they roll in the pride of their course ⁷. Ryno came to the mighty Caros. He struck his flaming spear. Come to the battle of Oscar, O thou that sittest on the rolling of waves ⁸ ! Fingal is distant far ; he hears the songs of bards in Morven : the wind of his hall is in his hair. His terrible spear is at his side ; his shield, that is like the darkened moon ! Come to the battle of Oscar ; the hero is alone !

He came not over the streamy Carun. The

*The sound of blustering winds, which all night long
Had roused the sea.*

See Darthula, ¹⁵.

⁷ *Like the streams of the hill ; when, after rain, they roll in the pride of their course.*] *Fingal*, iv. ²⁹. *Highlander*, iii. 65.

But as, *when after night* has beat a storm,
On the mild morn some spots the sky deform,
The broken clouds from every quarter sail,
Join their black troops, and all the heavens vail——
So when the youthful Haco shall afar
Collect the broken fragments of the war.

But the *broken clouds* in Fingal are here converted into the streams of the hill ; to which the warriors gathering round Oscar have but an imperfect resemblance.

⁸ *O thou that sittest on the rolling of waves.*] On the rolling of waters. First edit. *O thou that dwellest upon many waters.* *Jeremiah*, li. 13. The great whore that *sitteth* upon many waters. *Rev.* xviii. 1.

bard returned with his song. Grey night grows dim on Crona. The feast of shells is spread. A hundred oaks burn to the wind; faint light gleams over the heath. The ghosts of Ardven pass through the beam, and shew their dim and distant forms. Comala ⁹ is half unseen on her meteor; Hidallan is sullen and dim, like the darkened moon behind the mist of night ¹⁰.

“Why art thou sad?” said Ryno; for he alone beheld the chief. “Why art thou sad, Hidallan? hast thou not received thy fame? The songs of Ossian have been heard; thy ghost has brightened in wind, when thou didst bend from thy cloud, to hear the song of Morven’s bard!”

⁹ This is the scene of Comala’s death, which is the subject of the dramatic poem. The *poet* mentions her in this place, in order to *introduce the sequel of Hidallan’s story*, who, on account of her death, had been expelled from the wars of Fingal. MACPHERSON.

¹⁰ Dim, *like the darkened moon behind the mist of night.*] A repetition from MILTON, *Par. Lost.* i. 594.

As when the sun, new risen,
Looks through the horizontal *misty* air,
Shorn of his beams, or from *behind the moon*,
In *dim* eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nations——

Darkened so, yet shone, &c.

“ And do thine eyes,” said Oscar, “ behold the chief, like the dim meteor of night ? Say, Ryno, say, how fell Hidallan, the renowned in the days of my fathers ? His name remains on the rocks of Cona. I have often seen the streams of his hills ! ”

Fingal, replied the bard, drove Hidallan from his wars. The king’s soul was sad for Comala, and his eyes could not behold the chief. Lonely, sad along the heath, he slowly moved, with silent steps. His arms hang disordered on his side. His hair flies loose from his brow. The tear is in his down-cast eyes ; a sigh half-silent in his breast ! Three days he strayed unseen, alone, before he came to Lamor’s halls : the mossy halls of his fathers, at the stream of Balva¹¹. There Lamor sat alone beneath a tree ; for he had sent his people with Hidallan to war. The stream ran at his feet ; his grey head rested on his staff. Sightless are his aged eyes. He hums the song of other times. The noise of Hidallan’s

¹¹ This is perhaps that small stream, still retaining the name of Balva, which runs through the romantic valley of Glentivar in Stirlingshire. Balva signifies *a silent stream* ; and Glentivar. *the sequestered vale*. MACPHERSON.

feet came to his ear ; he knew the tread of his son.

“Is the son of Lamor returned? or is it the sound of his ghost? Hast thou fallen on the banks of Carun, son of the aged Lamor? Or, if I hear the sound of Hidallan’s feet, where are the mighty in the war? where are my people, Hidallan, that were wont to return with their echoing shields! Have they fallen on the banks of Carun?”

“No:” replied the sighing youth, “the people of Lamor live. They are renowned in war, my father; but Hidallan is renowned no more. I must sit alone on the banks of Balva, when the roar of the battle grows.”

“But thy fathers never sat alone,” replied the rising pride of Lamor. “They never sat alone on the banks of Balva, when the roar of battle rose. Dost thou not behold that tomb? My eyes discern it not; there rests the noble Garmállon, who never fled from war! Come, thou renowned in battle, he says, come to thy father’s tomb. How am I renowned, Garmállon? my son has fled from war!”

“King of the streamy Balva!” said Hidallan,

with a sigh, "why dost thou torment my soul? Lamor, I never fled. Fingal was sad for Comala; he denied his wars to Hidallan. Go to the grey streams of thy land, he said; moulder like a leafless oak, which the winds have bent over Balva, never more to grow ¹² !

"And must I hear," Lamor replied, "the lonely tread of Hidallan's feet? When thousands are renowned in battle, shall he bend over my grey streams? Spirit of the noble Garmállon! carry Lamor to his place; his eyes are dark; his soul is sad; his son has lost his fame!"

"Where," said the youth, "shall I search for fame to gladden the soul of Lamor? From whence shall I return with renown, that the sound of my arms may be pleasant in his ear? If I go to the chace of hinds, my name will not be heard. Lamor will not feel my dogs, with his hands, glad at my arrival from the hill. He will not enquire of his mountains, or of the dark-brown deer of his deserts!"

¹² *Moulder like a leafless oak—never more to grow.*] Repeated afterwards, "I must fall like a *leafless oak*," &c. From *Isaiah*, i. 30. For ye shall be as an *oak*, whose *leaf* *fadeth*, and as a garden that hath no water.

“I must fall,” said Lamor, “like a leafless oak : it grew on a rock ! it was overturned by the winds ! My ghost will be seen on my hills, mournful for my young Hidallan. Will not ye, ye mists, as ye rise, hide him from my sight ? My son ! go to Lamor’s hall : there the arms of our fathers hang. Bring the sword of Garmállon ; he took it from a foe !”

He went and brought the sword, with all its studded thongs. He gave it to his father. The grey-haired hero felt the point with his hand.

“My son ! lead me to Garmállon’s tomb ; it rises beside that rustling tree. The long grass is withered ; I hear the breezes whistling there. A little fountain murmurs near, and sends its water to Balva. There let me rest ; it is noon : the sun is on our fields !”

He led him to Garmállon’s tomb. Lamor pierced the side of his son. They sleep together : their ancient halls moulder away. Ghosts are seen there at noon : the valley is silent, and the people shun the place of Lamor ¹³.

¹³ Ghosts are seen there at noon :---the people shun the place of Lamor.] THOMSON’S *Summer*.

“Mournful is thy tale,” said Oscar, “son of the times of old ! My soul sighs for Hidallan ; he fell in the days of his youth. He flies on the blast of the desert, his wandering is in a foreign land. Sons of the echoing Morven ! draw near to the foes of Fingal. Send the night away in songs ; watch the strength of Caros. Oscar goes to the people of other times ; to the shades of silent Ardven ; where his fathers sit dim in their clouds, and behold the future war. And art thou there, Hidallan, like a half-extinguished meteor ? Come to my sight, in thy sorrow, chief of the winding Balva !”

The heroes move with their songs. Oscar slowly ascends the hill. The meteors of night set on the heath before him. A distant torrent faintly roars. Unfrequent blasts rush through aged oaks. The half-enlightened moon sinks dim and red behind her hill. Feeble voices are heard on the heath. Oscar drew his sword¹⁴ !

The lonely tower

Is also *shunned* ; whose mournful chambers hold,
So night-struck fancy dreams, the yelling *ghost*.

¹⁴ Oscar drew *his* sword.] In the *Hunter*, ii. 137.

He *drew* his sword, around a circle broke ;

Then blessed the place, and to himself thus spoke.
And the same imagery may be found in the *Hunter*. “The

“Come,” said the hero, “O ye ghosts of my fathers ! ye that fought against the kings of the world ! Tell me the deeds of future times ; and your converse in your caves ; when you talk together, and behold your sons in the fields of the brave.”

Trenmor came, from his hill, at the voice of his mighty son. A cloud, like the steed of the stranger, supported his airy limbs¹⁵. His robe is of the mist of Lano, that brings death to the people. His sword is a green meteor half-extinguished. His face is without form, and

meteors of night set on the heath before him. A distant torrent faintly roars. Unfrequent blasts rush through aged oaks. Feeble voices are heard on the heath.” *Hunter*, viii. 47.

Down the steep hill the headlong *torrent groans*——
And nought is heard but the shrill-*whistling blast*——
Athwart the gloom the sparkling *meteor sails*.——
While a *soft voice* invades my trembling ear——
’Twixt every blast is heard the pleasing sound,
Then in the howling hurricane is drowned.

“The half enlightened moon sinks dim and red behind her hill.”
In MACPHERSON’S poem on *Death*.

And *setting Luna* gave a silver gleam.

¹⁵ A cloud, like the steed of the stranger, supported his airy limbs.] Behold, the Lord *rideth* upon a *swift cloud* : *Isaiah*, xix. 1. compared to a *steed* supporting his *airy limbs* ; from Thomson’s description of the Aurora Borealis. *Autumn*.

Thronged with *aerial spears*, and *steeds of fire*.

dark ¹⁶. He sighed thrice over the hero : thrice the winds of night roared around ! Many were his words to Oscar ; but they only came by halves to our ears : they were dark as the tales of other times, before the light of the song arose ¹⁷. He slowly vanished, like a mist that melts on the sunny hill ¹⁸. It was then, O daughter of Toscar, my son began first to be sad. He

¹⁶ *His face is without form, and dark.*] Then a spirit passed before my face ; the hair of my flesh stood up : It stood still ; but I could not discern the *form* thereof. *Job*, iv. 15.

¹⁷ *Dark as the tales of other times, before the light of the song arose.*] A parody upon HORACE, *Od.* IV. ix. 25.

Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona

Multi ; sed omnes illacrimabiles

Urgentur ignotique longa

Nocte, carent quia vate sacro.

¹⁸ *Like a mist that melts on the sunny hill.*] THOMSON'S *Summer*.

Now flaming up the heavens, the potent sun

Melts into limpid air ; the high raised clouds

And morning fogs, that hover'd round the hills.

Imitated by GRAY :

And lessening from the dazzled sight,

Melts into air and liquid light.

But the original expression is in SHAKESPEARE, *Tempest*, iv. 3.

Are melted into air, into thin air.

And in the *Winter's Tale*, iii. 3.

And so, with shrieks,

She melted into air.

foresaw the fall of his race. At times he was thoughtful and dark ; like the sun when he carries a cloud on his face¹⁹ ; but again he looks forth from his darkness on the green hills of Cona.

Oscar passed the night among his fathers, grey morning met him on Carun's banks. A green vale surrounded a tomb which arose in the times of old²⁰. Little hills lift their heads at a distance ; and stretch their old trees to the wind. The warriors of Caros sat there ; for they had passed the stream by night. They appeared,

¹⁹ *Like the sun when he carries a cloud on his face.*] DRYDEN's *Virgil*, Georg. i.

Clouds on his brow, and spots upon his face.

"But he *looks* afterwards on the hills of Cona." First edit. *Looks* through the horizontal misty air. MILTON. How could such poetry be considered as ancient ?

²⁰ *A tomb, which arose in the times of old.*] A secret allusion to Arthur's Oven, which Buchanan considered at first as a temple of the god Terminus, till informed of similar monuments in the north of Scotland, the *sepulchres*, as some suspected, of distinguished men. The little hills, therefore, to which the warriors of Caros crossed from the opposite banks of the Carron, are the noted hills of Dunipace, which Buchanan describes as two miles farther up the stream, and on the same side with Arthur's Oven ; the tomb, or temple, where Oscar passed the night among his fathers.

like the trunks of aged pines, to the pale light of the morning. Oscar stood at the tomb, and raised thrice his terrible voice. The rocking hills echoed around ; the starting rocs bounded away : And the trembling ghosts of the dead fled, shrieking on their clouds. So terrible was the voice of my son, when he called his friends !

A thousand spears arose around ; the people of Caros rose. Why, daughter of Toscar, why that tear ? My son, though alone, is brave. Oscar is like a beam of the sky ; he turns around and the people fall. His hand is the arm of a ghost, when he stretches it from a cloud ; the rest of his thin form is unseen ; but the people die in the vale ²¹ ! My son beheld the approach of the foe ; he stood in the silent darkness of his strength. “Am I alone,” said Oscar, “in the midst of a thousand foes ? Many a spear is there : many a darkly-rolling eye ! Shall I fly to Ardvén ? But did my fathers ever fly ? The

²¹ *Oscar is like a beam of the sky—but the people die in the vale.*] Repeated from Fingal : “His sword was like the beam of heaven, when it pierces the sons of the vale,” &c. i. 57. But the arm of a ghost stretched from a cloud, and alone visible, is an idea suggested by some absurd print, of an arm stretching forth a sword from the clouds.

mark of their arm is in a thousand battles. Oscar, too, shall be renowned ! Come, ye dim ghosts of my fathers, and behold my deeds in war ! I may fall ; but I will be renowned like the race of the echoing Morven ²²." He stood, growing in his place²³, like a flood in a narrow vale ! The battie came ; but they fell : bloody was the sword of Oscar !

²² This passage is very like the soliloquy of Ulysses upon a similar occasion. MACPHERSON, first edit.

" He *stood* in the silent darkness of his strength. Am I *alone*," said Oscar, " in the *midst* of a *thousand* foes ? Many a spear is there ! many a darkly-rolling eye ! Shall I *fly* to *Ardven* ? But did my fathers ever fly ?---Oscar, too, shall be renowned !--- I may *fall* ; but I shall be *renowned* like the race of echoing Morven."

POPE's *Iliad*, xi. 513.

Now on the field Ulysses *stands alone*—
What farther subterfuge, what hopes remain ?
What shame inglorious, *if I quit the plain* ?
What danger singly, if I stand the ground,
My friends all scattered, *all my foes around* ?
Yet wherefore doubtful ? let this truth suffice ;
The brave meets danger, and the *coward flies* :
To *die* or *conquer* proves a hero's heart ;
And knowing this, I know a soldier's part.

²³ He stood, growing *in his place*.] *Par. Lost*, iv. 980.

Satan alarmed,

Collecting all his might, *dilated stood*.

The noise reached his people at Crona ; they came like a hundred streams. The warriors of Caros fled ; Oscar remained like a rock left by the ebbing sea. Now dark and deep, with all his steeds, Caros rolled his might along : the little streams are lost in his course ; the earth is rocking round. Battle spreads from wing to wing : ten thousand swords gleam at once in the sky. But why should Ossian sing of battles ? For never more shall my steel shine in war. I remember the days of my youth with grief ; when I feel the weakness of my arm. Happy are they who fell in their youth, in the midst of their renown²⁴ ! They have not beheld the tombs of their friend : or failed to bend the bow of their strength. Happy art thou, O Oscar, in the midst of thy rushing blast. Thou often goest

²⁴ Happy are they who fell in their youth, in the midst of their renown.] Τῆς ΜΑΚΑΡΕΣ Δαναοὶ καὶ τετράκις. *Odyss.* v. 306.

*Happy, thrice happy, who in battle slain,
Pressed, in Atrides' cause, the Trojan plain.
O had I died before that well-fought wall ;
Had some distinguished day renowned my fall !*

POPE.

to the fields of thy fame, where Caros fled from thy lifted sword.

Darkness comes on my soul, O fair daughter of Toscar, I behold not the form of my son at Carun ; nor the figure of Oscar on Crona. The rustling winds have carried him far away ; and the heart of his father is sad. But lead me, O Malvina, to the sound of my woods ; to the roar of my mountain streams. Let the chase be heard on Cona ; let me think on the days of other years. And bring me the harp, O maid, that I may touch it, when the light of my soul shall arise. Be thou near, to learn the song ; future times shall hear of me ! The sons of the feeble hereafter will lift the voice on Cona ; and, looking up to the rocks, say, “ Here Ossian dwelt.” They shall admire the chiefs of old ²⁵, the race that are no more ! while we ride on our clouds, Malvina, on the wings of the roaring winds ²⁶. Our voices shall be heard, at times, in

²⁵ *They shall admire the chiefs of old,*] VIRG. *Georg.* i. 497.

Grandiaque effossis mirabitur ossa sepulchris.

A passage frequently imitated in the sequel.

²⁶ *While we ride on our clouds, Malvina, on the wings of the*

the desert; we shall sing on the breeze of the rock.

roaring winds.] Behold, the Lord *rideth* upon a swift *cloud*. *Supra*, 15. He *rode* on a *cherub*, and did fly; yea, he did fly on the *wings* of the wind. *Psalms*, xviii. 10.

THE
WAR OF INIS-THONA:
A POEM.

ARGUMENT.

REFLECTIONS on the poet's youth. An apostrophe to Selma. Oscar obtains leave to go to Inis-thona, an island of Scandinavia. The mournful story of Argon and Ruro, the two sons of the king of Inis-thona. Oscar revenges their death, and returns in triumph to Selma. A soliloquy by the poet himself. MACPHERSON.

THE
WAR OF INIS-THONA :¹
A POEM.

OUR youth is like the dream of the hunter on
the hill of heath. He sleeps in the mild beams

¹ Inis-thona.] *The island of waves* ; a country of Scandinavia, subject to its own king, but depending upon the king of Lochlin. This poem is an episode, introduced in a great work composed by Ossian, in which the actions of his friends, and his beloved son Oscar, were interwoven. The work itself is lost : but some episodes, and the story of the poem, are handed down by tradition. There are some now living, who, in their youth, have heard the whole repeated. MACPHERSON, 1st edit.

Inis-thona is merely an alteration of Innisoën in Ireland ; but it appears, that the translator had provided for the discovery of future epic poems in the Highlands.

of the sun²; he awakes amidst a storm; the red lightning flies around: trees shake their heads to the wind! He looks back, with joy, on the day of the sun, and the pleasant dreams of his rest! When shall Ossian's youth return? When his ear delight in the sound of arms? When shall I, like Oscar, travel in the light of my steel³? Come, with your streams, ye hills of Cona! listen to the voice of Ossian. The song rises, like the sun, in my soul. I feel the joys of other times!

I behold thy towers, O Selma! the oaks of thy shaded wall: thy streams sound in my ear; thy heroes gather around. Fingal sits in the

² *Our youth is like the dream of the hunter---He sleeps in the mild beams of the sun.*] *Fingal*, vi. ¹¹. But this passage, I believe, is from SHAKESPEARE, *Tempest*, iv. 3.

We are such stuff

As dreams are made of, and our little life

Is rounded with a sleep.

³ *When shall I, like Oscar, travel in the light of my steel.*] *Comala*, ¹⁴. Who is this, that is glorious in his apparel, *travelling in the greatness of his strength*. *Isaiah*, lxiii. 1. Quoted by Macpherson. A ghost travelling in the light of steel, is much the same with the "hills of Cona coming with their streams, to listen to the voice of Ossian."

Audiit Eurotas, jussitque ediscere lauros.

midst. He leans on the shield of Trenmor: his spear stands against the wall; he listens to the song of his bards. The deeds of his arm are heard; the actions of the king in his youth! Oscar had returned from the chace, and heard the hero's praise. He took the shield of Branno from the wall; his eyes were filled with tears. Red was the cheek of youth. His voice was trembling, low. My spear shook its bright head in his hand: he spoke to Morven's king.

“Fingal! thou king of heroes! Ossian, next to him in war! ye have fought in your youth; your names are renowned in song. Oscar is like the mist of Cona; I appear, and I vanish away⁴: The bard will not know my name. The hunter will not search in the heath for my tomb. Let me fight, O heroes, in the battle of Inis-thona. Distant is the land of my war! ye shall not hear of Oscar's fall! Some bard may find me there; some bard may give my name to song. The daughter of the stranger shall see my tomb, and

⁴ *Oscar is like the mist of Cona; I appear, and I vanish away.*] *Highlander*, iii. 104.

But *I gleam once, then sink, and am no more.*

weep over the youth, that came from afar. The bard shall say, at the feast, "Hear the song of Oscar from the distant land !"

"Oscar," replied the king of Morven, "thou shalt fight, son of my fame ! Prepare my dark-bosomed ship to carry my hero to Inis-thona. Son of my son, regard our fame ; thou art of the race of renown ! Let not the children of strangers say, feeble are the sons of Morven ! Be thou, in battle, a roaring storm ; mild as the evening sun in peace ! Tell, Oscar, to Inis-thona's king, that Fingal remembers his youth ; when we strove in the combat together, in the days of Agandecca."

They lifted up the sounding sail ; the wind whistled through the thongs⁵ of their masts. Waves lash the oozy rocks ; the strength of ocean roars. My son beheld, from the wave, the land of groves. He rushed into Runa's

⁵ Leather thongs were used among the Celtic nations instead of ropes. MACPHERSON.

"They lifted up the sounding sail ; the winds *whistled* through the *thongs* of their masts." From the *Hunter*.

The murmuring *northwest*, with refreshing gales,

Hoarse *whistles* through the *shrouds*, and swells the *sails*.

soun'ling bay, and sent his sword to Annir of spears. The grey-haired hero rose, when he saw the sword of Fingal. His eyes were full of tears; he remembered his battles in youth. Twice had they lifted the spear, before the lovely Agandecca: heroes stood far distant, as if two spirits were striving in winds.

“But now,” began the king, “I am old; the sword lies useless in my hall. Thou, who art of Morven's race! Annir has seen the battle of spears; but now he is pale and withered, like the oak of Lano. I have no son to meet thee with joy, to bring thee to the halls of his fathers. Argon is pale in the tomb, and Ruro is no more.

In Fingal, “It speaks aloft in all my *shrouds* ;” but the thongs of the mast is a new discovery; from HOMER's *Odyssey*, ii. 424.

ἸΣΤΟΝ δ' εἰλάτινον κοίλης ἔντοσθε μεσόδμης
 Στῆσαν αἰέραντες· κατὰ δὲ πρωτόνοισιν ἔδησαν·
 Ἐλκον δ' ἰγία λευκὰ ΕΥΣΤΡΕΠΤΟΙΣΙ ΒΟΕΥΣΙΝ.

(See also *Odyssey*, viii. 53. xii. 423. xv. 291.) And the note itself, that “*Leather thongs were used among the Celtic nations instead of ropes*,” is transcribed from the Scholiast's observation on this last verse. Χρήσεως ΑΡΧΑΙΑΣ ΕΣΤΙ, καθ' ἣν καὶ νῦν οἱ περίπερ τῆς Ταύρης ἀρκτικοὶ Φωνῶν δέρμασι, καὶ ἄλλοις τισὶ τοιέτοις, τὴν τῶν ΣΧΟΙΝΙΩΝ ΧΡΕΙΑΝ ἀποπληρῶσι. Βοείας καὶ βοεὶς λέγει τὰς ἐκ ΒΟΕΙΩΝ ΙΜΑΝΤΑΣ ΚΑΛΩΑΣ. *Ih.*

My daughter is in the hall of strangers: she longs to behold my tomb. Her spouse shakes ten thousand spears; he comes, a cloud of death from Lano. Come, to share the feast of Annir, son of echoing Morven !”

Three days they feasted together; on the fourth Annir heard the name of Oscar. They rejoiced in the shell. They pursued the boars of Runa. Beside the fount of mossy stones, the weary heroes rest ⁶. The tear steals in secret from Annir: he broke the rising sigh. “Here darkly rest,” the hero said, “the children of my youth. This stone is the tomb of Ruro; that tree sounds over the grave of Argon. Do ye hear my voice, O my sons, within your narrow house? Or do ye speak in these rustling leaves, when the winds of the desert rise?”

“King of Inis-thona,” said Oscar, “how fell the children of youth? The wild boar rushes

⁶ Beside *the fount of mossy stones, the weary heroes rest.*] From MACPHERSON'S *Cave*.

*Beside a stone o'ergrown with moss,
Two well met hunters talk at ease;
Three panting dogs beside repose;
One bleeding deer is stretched on grass:*

over their tombs, but he does not disturb their repose. They pursue deer ⁷ formed of clouds, and bend their airy bow. They still love the sport of their youth; and mount the wind with joy."

"Cormalo," replied the king, "is a chief of ten thousand spears. He dwells at the waters of Lano, which send forth the vapour of death ⁸. He came to Runa's echoing halls, and sought

⁷ The notion of Ossian concerning the state of the deceased, was the same with that of the ancient Greeks and Romans. They imagined that the souls pursued, in their separate state, the employments and pleasures of their former life. MACPHERSON.

"They pursue deer formed of clouds, and bend the *airy bow*." From POPE's *Odyssey*, xi. 547. Quoted by Macpherson, 1st edit.

Now I the strength of Hercules behold,
A tow'ring spectre of gigantic mold;
Gloomy as night he stands, in act to throw
Th' *aerial* arrow from the twanging bow.

"They still love the *sports of their youth*, and mount the winds with joy." From VIRGIL, *Æn.* vi. 653. Quoted also by Macpherson, 1st edit.

Quæ gratia currum
Armorumque fuit vivis, quæ cura nitentes
Pascere equos; eadem sequitur tellure repositos.

⁸ *The waters of Lano, which send forth the cloud of death.*] First edit. *Fingal*, ii. 7. THOMSON, *Summer*.

the honour of the spear ⁹. The youth was lovely as the first beam of the sun ; few were they who could meet him in fight ! My heroes yielded to Cormalo : my daughter was seized in his love. Argon and Ruro returned from the chace ; the tears of their pride descend : they roll their silent eyes on Runa's heroes, who had yielded to a stranger. Three days they feasted with Cormalo : on the fourth young Argon fought. But who could fight with Argon ! Cormalo is overcome. His heart swelled with the grief of pride ; he resolved, in secret, to behold the death of my sons. They went to the hills of Runa : they pursued the dark-brown hinds. The arrow of Cormalo flew in secret : my children fell in blood. He came to the maid of his love ; to Inis-thona's long-haired maid. They fled over the desert.

The hoary fen,
In putrid steams, *emits the living cloud*
Of pestilence.

⁹ By *the honour of the spear* is meant the tournament practised among the ancient northern nations. MACPHERSON.

The tournament practised among the northern nations is taken from Mallet's account of the Edda, which was compiled by Saemund, or Snorro, in the twelfth century, and in which the customs and manners of chivalry are intermixed, of course, with the northern mythology.

Annir remained alone. Night came on, and day appeared; nor Argon's voice, nor Ruro's came. At length their much-loved dog was seen; the fleet and bounding Runar. He came into the hall and howled; and seemed to look toward the place of their fall. We followed him: we found them here: we laid them by this mossy stream. This is the haunt of Annir, when the chace of the hinds is past. I bend like the trunk of an aged oak; my tears for ever flow!"

"O Ronnan!" said the rising Oscar, "Ogar, king of spears! call my heroes to my side, the sons of streamy Morven. To-day we go to Lano's water, that sends forth the vapour of death. Cormalo will not long rejoice: death is often at the point of our swords!"

They came over the desert like stormy clouds, when the winds roll them along the heath¹⁰:

¹⁰ *Like stormy clouds, when the winds roll them over the heath.*] First edit. *Hunter*, iv. 101.

So, when *contending winds* for empire strive,
Through the cerulean vault the *clouds* they *drive*,
Till o'er *some brow* the gloomy shades engage.

Blair observes, that the edges of a cloud tinged with lightning is a sublime idea; but the shepherd and his flock render

their edges are tinged with lightning; the echoing groves foresee the storm! The horn of Oscar's battle is heard; Lano shook over all its waves. The children of the lake convened around the sounding shield of Cormalo. Oscar fought, as he was wont in war. Cormalo fell beneath his sword: the sons of dismal Lano fled to their secret vales! Oscar brought the daughter of Inis-thona to Annir's echoing halls. The face of age is bright with joy; he blest the king of swords!

How great was the joy of Ossian, when he beheld the distant sail of his son! it was like a cloud of light that rises in the east, when the traveller is sad in a land unknown¹¹; and dis-

Homer's simile (*Il.* iv. 275.) more picturesque. Their *edges tinged with lightning*, is a mere modern conceit, the refuse of a former imitation of Dryden's Virgil, *Fingal*, iv. 14.

So shines a cloud, when edged with adverse light.

¹¹ *Great was the joy of Ossian—when the traveller is sad in a land unknown.*] YOUNG'S *Night Thoughts*, N. iv.

With a patriarch's joy

Thy steps I follow to the land unknown.

But "the distant sail of his son, like a cloud of light that rises in the east," is a repetition from *Fingal*, "Thy sails are to me the clouds of the morning." ii. 35. And, "When the traveller is sad---and dismal night, with her ghosts, is sitting around in

mal night, with her ghosts, is sitting around in shades ! We brought him, with songs, to Selma's halls. Fingal spread the feast of shells. A thousand bards raised the name of Oscar : Morven answered to the sound. The daughter of Toscar was there ; her voice was like the harp ; when the distant sound comes, in the evening, on the soft-rustling breeze of the vale !

O lay me, ye that see the light, near some rock of my hills ! let the thick hazels be around, let the rustling oak be near. Green be the place of my rest¹² ; let the sound of the distant tor-

shades," is an imitation of Mason's *Elfrida*, that will frequently recur.

Away, ye goblins all,

Wont the *bewilder'd traveller* to daunt,

Whose vagrant feet have traced your secret haunt ;—

Away ! ye elves away !

Shrink at ambrosial morning's living ray.

¹² O lay me, ye *that see the light, near some rock of my hills ! let the thick hazels be around, let the rustling oak be near. Green be the place of my rest.*] Windsor Forest, 259.

Ye sacred nine ! that all my soul possess,

Whose raptures fire me, and whose *visions* bless,

Bear me, oh bear me, to *sequestered scenes*,

The *bowery mazes*, and *surrounding greens* :

To Thames's banks, which fragrant breezes fill,

Or where ye Muses sport on *Cooper's hill*.

rent be heard. Daughter of Toscar, take the harp, and raise the lovely song of Selma ; that sleep may overtake my soul in the midst of joy ; that the dreams of my youth may return, and the days of the mighty Fingal. Selma ! I behold thy towers, thy trees, thy shaded wall ! I see the heroes of Morven ; I hear the song of bards ¹³ ! Oscar lifts the sword of Cormalo ; a thousand youths admire its studded thongs. They look with wonder on my son : They admire the strength of his arm. They mark the joy of his father's eyes ; they long for an equal fame. And ye shall have your fame, O sons of streamy Morven ! My soul is often brightened with song ; I remember the friends of my youth. But sleep descends, in the sound of the harp ! pleasant dreams begin to rise ! Ye sons of the chace, stand far distant, nor disturb my rest ¹⁴. The bard of

¹³ *Selma ! I behold thy towers, thy trees, thy shaded wall ! I see the heroes of Morven ; I hear the song of bards.*] The same imitation continued. Audire, et videor pios errare per lucos.

I seem through consecrated walks to rove,

I hear soft music die along the grove :

Led by the sound, I roam from *shade* to *shade*,

By *godlike poets* venerable made. *Ib.*

¹⁴ *Ye sons of the chace stand far distant, nor disturb my rest.*]

other times holds discourse with his fathers, the chiefs of the days of old ! Sons of the chace, stand far distant ! disturb not the dreams of Ossian !

I charge you, *O ye daughters of Jerusalem*, by the roes and by the hinds of the field, that ye *stir* not up, nor *awake* my love till he please. *Song of Solomon*, viii. 4. Quoted by Macpherson, 1st edit.

Procul, o, procul este, profani,
Conclamat vates, totoque absistite luco.

THE
BATTLE OF LORA:

A POEM.

ARGUMENT.

FINGAL, on his return from Ireland, after he had expelled Swaran from that kingdom, made a feast to all his heroes : he forgot to invite Ma-ronnan and Aldo, two chiefs, who had not been along with him in his expedition. They resented his neglect ; and went over to Erragon, king of Sora, a country of Scandinavia, the declared enemy of Fingal. The valour of Aldo soon gained him a great reputation in Sora : and Lorma, the beautiful wife of Erragon, fell in love with him. He found means to escape with her, and to come to Fingal, who resided then in Selma on the western coast. Erragon invaded Scotland, and was slain in battle by Gaul, the son of Morni, after he had rejected the terms of peace offered him by Fingal. In this war Aldo fell, in a single combat, by the hands of his rival Erragon ; and the unfortunate Lorma afterwards died of grief. MACPHERSON.

The subject is taken from an Irish ballad concerning the invasion of Ireland by Airgin Mac Annir, converted into Erragon, king of Lochlin, whose wife had eloped with Aildo (Aldo), one of the Fions. But St Patrick, to whom the tale is addressed in the ballad, is transformed into a Culdee ; and, in the first edition, the poem itself is entitled, *Duan a Culdich*, The Culdee's Poem ; as if there were Culdees in Scotland before the conversion of the Picts by Ninian (*anno* 412), and Columba (585) ; and even before the first introduction of monks into the west of Europe, *anno* 370.

THE
BATTLE OF LORA :
A POEM.

SON of the distant land, who dwellest in the secret cell ! do I hear the sound of thy grove ? or is it thy voice of songs ? The torrent was loud in my ear ; but I heard a tuneful voice. Dost thou praise the chiefs of thy land : or the spirits of the wind ¹ ? But, lonely dweller of

¹ Alluding to the religious hymns of the Culdees. MACPHERSON.

Alluding rather to Thomson's Ode on Æolus's harp, from which this address to the hermit, the *lonely dweller* of the rocks, is derived.

“ Son of the distant land, *who dwellest* in the *secret cell*, do I hear the *sound* of thy *groves* ? or is it thy *voice of songs* ? ”

rocks ! look thou on that heathy plain. Thou
seest green tombs, with their rank whistling
grass : With their stones of mossy heads². Thou

*Ætherial race, inhabitants of air,
Who hymn your god amid the secret grove :
Ye unseen beings, to my harp repair,
And raise majestic strains, or melt in love.*

“ The torrent was loud in my ear ; *but I heard* a tuneful voice.”
But, hark ! that strain was of a graver tone,
On the deep string his hand some *hermit* throws ;
Or he, the sacred bard, who sat *alone*,
In the *drear waste*, and wept his people’s woes.

“ Dost thou *praise* the chiefs of thy land ? or the *spirits* of the
wind ?”

Methinks I hear the full celestial choir,
Through heaven’s high dome their awful anthem raise,
Now chaunting clear, and now they all conspire,
To swell the lofty hymn from *praise* to *praise*.

Let me, ye wandering *spirits* of the *wind*,
Who, as wild fancy prompts you, touch the string,
Smit with your theme, be in your chorus joined ;
For till you cease, my muse forgets to sing.

Such are the modern improvements of the Irish ballad of Erra-
gon, beginning, “ One day when Patrick had no Psalms to sing.”

² *Green tombs, with their rank whistling grass ; with their
stones of mossy heads.*] From MACPIERSON’S *Nightpiece*.

*A tomb its dreary honour shews !
Three stones exalt their heads of moss ;
Dry tufts of grass around it rise ;
The wind along the brushwood sighs.*

In the next paragraph, “ *Four mossy stones in the midst of wi-*

seest them, son of the rock ; but Ossian's eyes have failed.

A mountain-stream comes roaring down, and sends its waters round a green hill. Four mossy stones, in the midst of withered grass, rear their heads on the top. Two trees, which the storms have bent, spread their whistling branches around. This is thy dwelling, Erragon³; this thy narrow house: the sound of thy shells have been long forgot in Sora. Thy shield is become dark in thy hall. Erragon, king of ships ! chief of distant Sora ! how hast thou fallen on our mountains ? How is the mighty low⁴ ? Son of the secret cell ! dost thou delight in songs ? Hear the battle of Lora. The sound of its steel is long since past. So thunder on the darkened

withered grass, rear their heads on the top. Two trees, which the winds have bent, spread their whistling branches around."

³ Erragon, or Ferg-thonn, signifies *the rage of the waves*; probably a poetical name given him by Ossian himself; for he goes by the name of Annir in tradition. MACPHERSON.

⁴ *Erragon, king of ships ! chief of distant Sora, how hast thou fallen on our mountains ? How is the mighty low.*] The beauty of Israel is slain *upon the high places*; how are the mighty fallen ? How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle ! O Jonathan ! thou wast slain in thine *high places*. 2 Sam. i 19. 25. Quoted by Macpherson, 1st edit.

hill roars, and is no more. The sun returns with his silent beams. The glittering rocks, and green heads of the mountains, smile ⁵ !

The bay of Cona received our ships from Erin's rolling waves. Our white sheets hung loose to the masts. The boisterous winds roared behind the groves of Morven. The horn of the king is sounded ; the deer start from their rocks. Our arrows flew in the woods. The feast of the hill is spread. Our joy was great on our rocks, for the fall of the terrible Swaran. Two heroes

⁵ *So thunder on the darkened hill roars and is no more. The sun returns with his silent beams. The glittering rocks, and green heads of the mountains, smile.*] An imitation that recurs in the poem under various forms. From HOMER, *Il.* xvi. 297.

Ὦς δ' ὅτ' ἀφ' ὑψηλῆς ΚΟΡΥΦΗΣ ΟΡΕΟΣ μέγαλοιο
 Κινήσει ΠΥΚΙΝΗΝ ΝΕΦΕΛΗΝ ΣΤΕΡΟΠΗΓΕΡΕΤΑ Ζεύς,
 Ἐκ τ' ΕΦΑΝΟΝ πασαι ΣΚΟΠΙΑΙ καὶ ΠΡΩΟΝΕΣ ΑΚΡΟΙ,
 Καὶ νάπαι, οὐρανύθεν δ' ἄρ' ὑπερῶα γη ἄσπετος αἰθήρ.

So, when *thick clouds* enwrap the *mountain's head*,
 O'er heaven's expanse, like one black ceiling spread ;
 Sudden the *thunderer*, with a flashing *ray*,
 Bursts through the *darkness*, and lets down the day :
 The *hills* shine out, the *rocks* in prospect rise,
 And streams, and vales, and forests, strike the eyes.
 The *smiling* scene wide opens to the sight,
 And all th' immeasured ether flames with light.

POPE.

were forgot at our feast. The rage of their bosoms burned. They rolled their red eyes in secret. The sigh bursts from their breasts. They were seen to talk together, and to throw their spears on earth. They were two dark clouds, in the midst of our joy ; like pillars of mist on the settled sea. They glitter to the sun ; but the mariners fear a storm.

“ Raise my white sails,” said Maronnan, “ raise them to the winds of the west. Let us rush, O Aldo, through the foam of the northern wave. We are forgot at the feast : but our arms have been red in blood. Let us leave the hills of Fingal, and serve the king of Sora. His countenance is fierce. War darkens around his spear. Let us be renowned, O Aldo, in the battles of other lands !”

They took their swords, their shields of thongs. They rushed to Lumar’s resounding bay. They came to Sora’s haughty king, the chief of bounding steeds. Erragon had returned from the chace. His spear was red in blood. He bent his dark face to the ground ; and whistled as he went. He took the strangers to his feasts : they fought and conquered in his wars.

Aldo returned with his fame towards Sora's lofty walls. From her tower looked the spouse of Erragon, the humid, rolling eyes of Lorma. Her yellow hair flies on the wind of ocean. Her white breast heaves, like snow on heath ; when the gentle winds arise, and slowly move it in the light. She saw young Aldo, like the beam of Sora's setting sun. Her soft heart sighed. Tears filled her eyes. Her white arm supported her head ⁶. Three days she sat within the hall, and covered her grief with joy. On the fourth she fled with the hero, along the troubled sea. They came to Cona's mossy towers, to Fingal king of spears.

“ Aldo, of the heart of pride ! ” said Fingal,

⁶ *Her white arm supported her head.*] Transcribed from the *Highlander*, iv. 283.

*Culena leaning on her snowy arms,
Observant from the window points her charms.
Th' imperial virgin saw, with pleasing pain,
The favourite youth victorious on the plain ;
Sadly she sighed, accusing cruel fate,
Which chained her in captivity of state.*

“ From her tower looked the spouse of Erragon, &c. She saw young Aldo, like the beam of Sora's setting sun. Her soft heart sighed. Tears filled her eyes. Her white arm supported her head.”

rising in wrath : “ shall I defend thee from the rage of Sora’s injured king ? Who will now receive my people into their halls ? Who will give the feast of strangers, since Aldo, of the little soul, has dishonoured my name in Sora ? Go to thy hills, thou feeble hand. Go : hide thee in thy caves. Mournful is the battle we must fight, with Sora’s gloomy king. Spirit of the noble Trenmor ! When will Fingal cease to fight ? I was born in the midst of battles ⁷, and my steps must move in blood to the tomb. But my hand did not injure the weak, my steel did not touch the feeble in arms. I behold thy tempests, O Morven, which will overturn my halls ; when my children are dead in battle, and none remains to dwell in Selma. Then will the feeble come, but they will not know my tomb. My renown is only in song. My deeds shall be as a dream to future times ! ”

His people gathered around Erragon, as the storms round the ghost of night ; when he calls

⁷ Comhal, the father of Fingal, was slain in battle, against the tribe of Morni, the very day that Fingal was born ; so that he may, with propriety, be said to have been *born in the midst of battles*. MACPHERSON.

them, from the top of Morven, and prepares to pour them on the land of the stranger⁸. He came to the shore of Cona. He sent his bard to the king ; to demand the combat of thousands ; or the land of many hills ! Fingal sat in his hall with the friends of his youth around him. The young heroes were at the chace, far distant in the desert. The grey-haired chiefs talked of other times ; of the actions of their youth ; when the aged Nartmor came, the chief of streamy Lora.

“This is no time,” said Nartmor, “to hear the songs of other years : Erragon frowns on the coast, and lifts ten thousand swords. Gloomy is the king among his chiefs ! he is like the darkened moon, amidst the meteors of night⁹ ;

⁸ *As the storms round the ghost of night, when he calls them from the top of Morven.*] THOMSON'S *Spring*.

And see where surly *winter* passes off
Far to the north, and *calls* his ruffian *blasts* ;
His blasts obey, and quite the howling hill,
The shattered forest, and the ravaged vale.

⁹ *Like the darkened moon amidst the meteors of night ;*] “when they sail along her skirts, and give the *light* that has failed o'er her orb.” From THOMSON'S *Autumn*.

But when *half blotted* from the sky, her *light*
Fainting, permits the starry fires to burn ;

when they sail along her skirts, and give the light that has failed o'er her orb." "Come," said Fingal, "from thy hall, come, daughter of my love: come from thy hall, Bosmina, maid of streamy Morven! Nartmor, take the steeds of the strangers. Attend the daughter of Fingal! Let her bid the king of Sora to our feast, to Selma's shaded wall. Offer him, O Bosmina, the peace of heroes, and the wealth of generous Aldo. Our youths are far distant. Age is on our trembling hands!"

She came to the host of Erragon, like a beam of light to a cloud¹⁰. In her right hand was seen a sparkling shell. In her left, an arrow of

Or *near extinct* her *deadened orb* appears,
And scarce appears, of *sickly, beamless white* :
Oft in this season, silent from the north,
A *blaze of meteors* shoots : *Ensweeping* first
The lower skies, they all at once converge,
All ether *coursing* in a *maze of light*.

"When they *sail* along her skirts, and give the *light* which has *failed* o'er her orb." These additions, distinguished in the text by Italics, never fail to discover the original.

¹⁰ *She came to the host—like a beam of light to a cloud.*] *Par. Lost*, iv. 150.

On which the *sun*, more glad, impressed his *beams*,
Than in fair evening *cloud*.

gold. The first, the joyful mark of peace ! The latter the sign of war. Erragon brightened in her presence as a rock, before the sudden beams of the sun ; when they issue from a broken cloud, divided by the roaring wind ¹¹ !

“ Son of the distant Sora,” began the mildly blushing maid, “ come to the feast of Morven’s king, to Selma’s shaded walls. Take the peace of heroes, O warrior ! Let the dark sword rest by thy side. Chusest thou the wealth of kings ?

¹¹ Brightened in her presence *as a rock before the sudden beams of the sun, when they issue from a broken cloud, divided by the roaring wind.*] The remainder of the former imitation of Homer. *Supra* 4.

So, when *thick clouds* enwrap the mountain’s head,
O’er heaven’s expanse, like one black ceiling spread,
Sudden the thunderer, with a *flashing ray*,
Bursts through the darkness, and *lets down the day* :
The hills shine out, the *rocks* in prospect rise.—
And all th’ immeasured ether flames with light.

“ When they issue from a *broken cloud*, divided by the *roaring wind*.”

ΚΙΝΗΣΕΙ πυκινὴν ΝΕΦΕΛΗΝ ΣΤΕΡΟΠΗΓΕΡΕΤΑ ΖΕΥΣ—

οὐρανόνθεν δ’ ἄρ’ ΥΠΕΡΡΑΓΗ ἄσπετος αἰθήρ.

“ When great Jove dispels, with his bolt, the *thick cloud* that has settled on high, *bright* rise all the *rocks* to the sight. The *broken* tops of the hills appear.” MACPHERSON’S *Homer*, ii. 133. In all these imitations, we discover the *disjecti membra poetæ*.

Then hear the words of generous Aldo. He gives to Erragon an hundred steeds, the children of the rein; an hundred maids from distant lands; an hundred hawks with fluttering wing, that fly across the sky. An hundred girdles ¹² shall also

¹² Sanctified girdles, till very lately, were kept in many families in the north of Scotland; they were bound about women in labour, and were supposed to alleviate their pains, and to accelerate the birth. They were impressed with several mystical figures, and the ceremony of binding them about the woman's waist, was accompanied with words and gestures, which shewed the custom to have come originally from the druids. MACPHERSON.

The sanctified girdles, introduced by the druids, for high-bosomed, or pregnant maids, are girdles consecrated by the relics of Irish saints; the only druids that ever were in Scotland. But the hundred horses, the hundred hawks, the shells, or dishes, and the hundred girdles, are taken from the Irish ballad of Erragon, in which Fingal's daughter holds two golden apples in her right hand, instead of the shell of peace, and the arrow of gold. We are told that the horses were the steeds of the stranger, taken in the incursions of the Caledonians into the Roman provinces; (1st edit.) and the hundred maids from distant lands, were, probably, Roman matrons taken at Carron; but hawking, in the third century, was confined to a small district in Thrace, and was absolutely unknown to the rest of Europe. Yet I have seen Nemesianus *de Aucupio*, a fictitious authority, quoted as a proof that hawking was known to the Romans, and, of course, to the ancient Britons, in Pliny's time.

be thine, to bind high-bosomed maids. The friends of the births of heroes. The cure of the sons of toil. Ten shells, studded with gems, shall shine in Sora's towers: the bright water trembles on their stars, and seems to be sparkling wine. They gladdened once the kings of the world¹³, in the midst of their echoing halls. These, O hero, shall be thine; or thy white-bosomed spouse. Lorma shall roll her bright eyes in thy halls; though Fingal loves the generous Aldo: Fingal! who never injured a hero, though his arm is strong!"

¹³ The Roman emperors. These shells were some of the spoils of the province. MACPHERSON.

In the Annals of Ulster, "anno 1023, Henrich, *king of the world*, died." And the expression, applied in Irish chronicles to the emperor Henry II., seems to be transferred by Macpherson to the Roman emperors. But the ten shells, the spoils of the provinces, are from the hundred dishes (*ceud mios*, *miosur*, a measure; *mios*, a dish) of the Irish ballad. And the description of the shells is from Pope's translation of the first book of the *Thebais* of Statius, 208.

Now *gems* in bowls *embossed* were seen to *shine*,

Blaze on the *brims*, and *sparkle* in the *wine*.

"Ten shells, *studded* with *gems*, shall shine in Sora's towers. The bright water *trembles* on their *stars*, and seems to be *sparkling wine*."

“Soft voice of Cona!” replied the king, “tell him, he spreads his feast in vain. Let Fingal pour his spoils around me. Let him bend beneath my power. Let him give me the swords of his fathers : the shields of other times ; that my children may behold them in my halls, and say, “These are the arms of Fingal.” “Never shall they behold them in thy halls !” said the rising pride of the maid ; “they are in the hands of heroes, who never yielded in war. King of echoing Sora ! the storm is gathering on our hills. Dost thou not foresee the fall of thy people, son of the distant land ?”

She came to Selma’s silent halls. The king beheld her down-cast eyes. He rose from his place, in his strength. He shook his aged locks. He took the sounding mail of Trenmor. The dark-brown shield of his fathers. Darkness filled Selma’s hall, when he stretched his hand to his spear : the ghosts of thousands were near, and foresaw the death of the people. Terrible joy rose in the face of the aged heroes. They rushed to meet the foe. Their thoughts are on the deeds of other years ; and on the fame that rises from death !

Now at Trathal's ancient tomb the dogs of the chace appeared. Fingal knew that his young heroes followed. He stopt in the midst of his course. Oscar appeared the first; then Morni's son, and Némí's race. Fercuth shewed his gloomy form. Dermid spread his dark hair on wind. Ossian came the last. I hummed the song of other times. My spear supported my steps over the little streams. My thoughts were of mighty men. Fingal struck his bossy shield; and gave the dismal sign of war. A thousand swords, at once unsheathed, gleam on the waving heath¹⁴. Three grey-haired sons of song raise the tuneful, mournful voice. Deep and dark, with sounding steps, we rush, a gloomy ridge, along; like the shower of a storm, when it pours on a narrow vale¹⁵.

¹⁴ *A thousand swords, at once unsheathed, gleam on the waving heath.*] *Par. Lost*, i. 663. Quoted by Macpherson.

He spake, and to confirm his words, *outflew*
Millions of flaming swords. The sudden blaze
 Far round *illumin'd hell*: highly they raged
 Against the Highest; and fierce, with grasped arms,
 Clashed on their *sounding shields* the *din* of war.

"Fingal struck his *bossy shield*, and gave the *dismal sign* of war."

¹⁵ *Like the shower of a storm, when it pours on a narrow vale.*] And in the next paragraph, "Erragon came on in his

The king of Morven sat on his hill. The sun-beam of battle flew on the wind. The friends of his youth are near, with all their waving locks of age. Joy rose in the hero's eyes when he beheld his sons in war; when he saw us amidst the lightning of swords, mindful of the deeds of our fathers. Erragon came on, in his strength, like the roar of a winter stream. The battle falls around his steps: death dimly stalks along by his side!

“Who comes,” said Fingal, “like the bounding roe, like the hart of echoing Cona¹⁶? His shield glitters on his side. The clang of his armour is mournful. He meets with Erragon in

strength, like the *roar of a winter stream.*” From THOMSON'S *Winter*.

At last the rous'd up river *pours along,*

‘ Resistless, *roaring*, dreadful, down it comes——

Then o'er the *sanded valley* floating, spreads,

Calm, sluggish, silent, till again constrained

Between two meeting hills, it bursts away.

‘The winter stream, converted, in the first imitation, into the shower of the storm in a narrow vale.

¹⁶ *Who comes, said Fingal, like the bounding roe, like the hart of echoing Cona.*] Behold he cometh, leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. My beloved is like a roe, or a young hart. *Song of Solomon*, ii. 8. Be thou like a roe, or a young hart, upon the mountains of Bether. *Id.* 17.

the strife ! Behold the battle of the chiefs ! It is like the contending of ghosts in a gloomy storm. But fallest thou, son of the hilk; and is thy white bosom stained with blood ? Weep, unhappy Lorma, Aldo is no more !” The king took the spear of his strength. He was sad for the fall of Aldo. He bent his deathful eyes on the foe : but Gaul met the king of Sora. Who can relate the fight of the chiefs ? The mighty stranger fell !

“Sons of Cona !” Fingal cried aloud, “stop the hand of death. Mighty was he that is low. Much is he mourned in Sora ! The stranger will come towards his hall, and wonder why it is so silent. The king is fallen, O stranger. The joy of his house is ceased. Listen to the sound of his woods. Perhaps his ghost is murmuring there ! But he is far distant, on Morven, beneath the sword of a foreign foe.” Such were the words of Fingal, when the bard raised the song of peace. We stopped our uplifted swords. We spared the feeble foe. We laid Erragon in a tomb. I raised the voice of grief. The clouds of night came rolling down. The ghost of Erragon appeared to some. His face was cloudy

and dark ; an half-formed sigh is in his breast.
 “Blest be thy soul, O king of Sora ! thine arm
 was terrible in war !”

Lorma sat in Aldo's hall. She sat at the light
 of a flaming oak. The night came down ; but
 he did not return. The soul of Lorma is sad !
 “What detains thee, hunter of Cona ? Thou
 didst promise to return. Has the deer been dis-
 tant far ? do the dark winds sigh round thee on
 the heath ? I am in the land of strangers ; where
 is my friend, but Aldo ? Come from thy sound-
 ing hills, O my best beloved !”

Her eyes are turned toward the gate. She
 listens to the rustling blast. She thinks it is Al-
 do's tread. Joy rises in her face ! But sorrow
 returns again, like a thin cloud on the moon¹⁷.
 “Wilt thou not return, my love ! Let me be-
 hold the face of the hill. The moon is in the
 east. Calm and bright is the breast of the lake !
 When shall I behold his dogs, returning from
 the chace ? When shall I hear his voice, loud

¹⁷ *Sorrow returns again, like a thin cloud on the moon.*
Night Thoughts, Night iii.

Our dying friends *come o'er us like a cloud*.
 From SHAKESPEARE, *Macbeth*, iii. 4.

And *overcome us like a summer's cloud*.

and distant on the wind ? Come from thy sounding hills, hunter of woody Cona !” His thin ghost appeared on a rock, like a watry beam of feeble light : When the moon rushes sudden from between two clouds ¹⁸, and the midnight shower is on the field ! She followed the empty form over the heath. She knew that her hero fell. I heard her approaching cries on the wind, like the mournful voice of the breeze, when it sighs on the grass of the cave ¹⁹ !

She came. She found her hero ! Her voice was heard no more. Silent she rolled her eyes. She was pale, and wildly sad ²⁰ ! Few were her

¹⁸ *His thin ghost appeared, on a rock, like a watry beam of feeble light : When the moon rushes sudden from between two clouds.*] A repetition of “ Erragon brightened as a rock before the sudden beams of the sun, when they issue from a broken cloud ;” and in the changes rung upon Homer’s simile ; the only difference is between the sudden beams of the sun in darkness, and the sudden moon-shine, when the shower is on the field. *Supra*, 4. 2.

¹⁹ *Like the mournful voice of the breeze, when it sighs on the grass of the cave.*] *Highlander*, iv. 3.

The storm subsides, the breezes, as they pass,
Sigh on their way along the pearly grass.

²⁰ *She was pale, and wildly sad.*] In the first edition, “ She was pale as a watry cloud, that rises from the lake, to the beam of the moon :” an exuberance of imagery restrained with

days on Cona. She sunk into the tomb. Fingal commanded his bards ; they sung over the death of Lorma. The daughters of Morven mourned her, for one day in the year, when the dark winds of autumn returned ²¹ !

Son of the distant land ²² ! Thou dwellest in the field of fame ! O let thy song arise, at times, in praise of those who fell. Let their thin ghosts rejoice around thee ; and the soul of Lorma come on a feeble beam ²³ : when thou liest down to rest, and the moon looks into thy cave. Then shalt thou see her lovely ; but the tear is still on her cheek !

advantage, by a degree of judgment acquired in the progress of time. Pref. edit. 1774.

²¹ *The daughters of Morven mourned her one day in the year, when the dark winds of autumn returned.*] And it was a custom in Israel, that “ the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah, four days in the year.” *Judges*, xi. 39. Quoted by Macpherson. In transferring the custom of Israel to the daughters of Morven, Ossian must have been indebted to his friend the Culdee, to whom the poem is addressed.

²² The poet addresses himself to the Culdee. MACPHERSON.

²³ Be thou on a moon-beam, O Morna, near the window of my rest ; when my thoughts are of peace ; and the din of arms is past. *Fingal*, i. 41. MACPHERSON.

CONLATH AND CUTHONA:

A POEM.

ARGUMENT.

CONLATH was the youngest of Morni's sons, and brother to the celebrated Gaul. He was in love with Cuthona, the daughter of Rumar, when Toscar, the son of Kinfena, accompanied by Fercuth, his friend, arrived, from Ireland, at Mora, where Conlath dwelt. He was hospitably received; and, according to the custom of the times, feasted three days with Conlath. On the fourth he set sail, and, coasting the *island of waves (Ithona)*, one of the Hebrides, he saw Cuthona hunting, fell in love with her, and carried her away, by force, in his ship. He was forced, by stress of weather, into I-thona, a desert isle. In the mean time, Conlath, hearing of the rape, sailed after him, and found him on the point of sailing for the coast of Ireland. They fought, and they and their followers fell by mutual wounds. Cuthona did not long survive; for she died of grief the third day after. Fingal, hearing of their unfortunate death, sent Stormal, the son of Moran, to bury them, but forgot to send a bard to sing the funeral song over their tombs. The ghost of Conlath comes, long after, to Ossian, to intreat him to transmit to posterity his and Cuthona's fame. For it was the opinion of the times, that the souls of the deceased were not happy till their elegies were composed by a bard. MACPHERSON.

The poem, which is scarcely intelligible without this preliminary explanation, is of little value, perhaps, when explained. Toscar carrying Cuthona away, and overtaken by Conlath,

her lover, in a desert isle, where they perish, with their followers, by mutual wounds, without a single survivor to bury the dead, is sufficiently extravagant. But nothing can be more absurd than the conduct of the poem, which opens with a conversation between Ossian and the ghost of Conlath, and which is conducted as a dramatic dialogue between different ghosts, rehearsing, and acting over again, in Ossian's presence, the last speeches and scenes of their lives. For it seems, that the souls of the deceased could no more be happy, in the Highlands of Scotland, without the funeral service, or song of fame, than the Grecian shades without the rites of sepulture.

CONLATH AND CUTHONA:

A POEM.

DID not Ossian hear a voice ? or is it the sound of days that are no more ? Often does the memory of former times come, like the evening sun, on my soul. The noise of the chace is renewed. In thought I lift the spear. But Ossian did hear a voice ! Who art thou, son of night ? The children of the feeble are asleep. The midnight wind is in my hall. Perhaps it is the shield of Fingal that echoes to the blast. It hangs in Ossian's hall. He feels it sometimes with his hands. Yes ! I hear thee, my friend ! Long has thy voice been absent from mine ear ! What

brings thee, on thy cloud, to Ossian, son of generous Morni? Are the friends of the aged near thee? Where is Oscar, son of fame? He was often near thee, O Conlath, when the sound of battle arose.

GHOST OF CONLATH.

Sleeps the sweet voice of Cona, in the midst of his rustling hall? Sleeps Ossian in his hall, and his friends without their fame? The sea rolls round dark I-thona. Our tombs are not seen in our isle. How long shall our fame be unheard, son of resounding Selma?

OSSIAN.

O that mine eyes could behold thee! Thou sittest, dim, on thy cloud! Art thou like the mist of Lano? A half-extinguished meteor of fire? Of what are the skirts of thy robe? Of what is thine airy bow? He is gone on his blast, like the shade of a wandering cloud. Come from thy wall, O harp! Let me hear thy sound. Let the light of memory rise on I-thona. Let me behold again my friends! And Ossian does behold his friends, on the dark-blue isle. The cave of Thonia appears, with its mossy rocks and bending trees. A stream roars at its mouth.

Toscar bends over its course. Fercuth is sad by his side. Cuthóna sits at a distance, and weeps. Does the wind of the waves deceive me? Or do I hear them speak?

TOSCAR.

The night was stormy. From their hills the groaning oaks came down. The sea darkly-tumbled beneath the blast. The roaring waves climbed against our rocks. The lightning came often and shewed the blasted fern. Fercuth! I saw the ghost who embroiled the night¹. Silent he stood, on that bank. His robe of mist flew on the wind. I could behold his tears. An aged man he seemed, and full of thought!

¹ It was long thought, in the north of Scotland, that storms were raised by the ghosts of the deceased. This notion is still entertained by the vulgar; for they think that *whirlwinds*, and sudden *squalls* of wind, are occasioned by *spirits*, who *transport themselves*, in that manner, from one place to another. MACPHERSON.

This vulgar notion is to be found only in Macpherson's *Hunter*, in which the fairy princess is thus transported to her father's court.

She spoke; the eddying whirlwind sweeps the skies;
Borne on a blast, the fleeting Flavia flies;
Clods, dust, and straws, in one confusion fly,
And trembling atoms mingle with the sky.

FERCUTH.

It was thy father, O Toscar. He foresees some death among his race. Such was his appearance on Cromla, before the great Maronnan ² fell. Erin of hills of grass ! how pleasant are thy vales ! Silence is near thy blue streams. The sun is on thy fields. Soft is the sound of the harp in Seláma ³. Lovely the cry of the hunter on Cromla. But we are in dark I-thona, surrounded by the storm. The billows lift their white heads above our rocks. We tremble amidst the night.

TOSCAR.

Whither is the soul of battle fled, Fercuth, with locks of age ? I have seen thee undaunted

² Ma-ronnan was the brother of Toscar. The translator has a poem in his possession concerning the extraordinary death of that hero. MACPHERSON.

Ma-ronnan ; from the Battle of Lora, the preceding poem : but the name, in the Irish ballad of Erragon, in the *translator's* possession, is *Macronnan*, the son of Ronnan, not of Kinfena the father of Toscar.

³ Selámáth, *beautiful to behold*, the name of Toscar's residence, on the coast of Ulster, near the mountain Cromla. MACPHERSON.

Altered to Tura, in the episode of Lamderg and Gelchossa. *Fingal*, v. 16.

in danger : thine eyes burning with joy in the fight. Whither is the soul of battle fled ? Our fathers never feared. Go ; view the settling sea : the stormy wind is laid. The billows still tremble on the deep. They seem to fear the blast. Go ; view the settling sea ⁴. Morning is grey on our rocks. The sun will look soon from his east ; in all his pride of light ! I lifted up my sails, with joy, before the halls of generous Conlath. My course was by a desert isle : where Cuthona pursued the deer. I saw her, like that beam of the sun that issues from the cloud. Her hair was on her heaving breast. She, bending forward, drew the bow. Her white arm seemed, behind her, like the snow of Cromla. Come to my soul, I said, huntress of the desert isle ! But she wastes her time in tears. She thinks of the generous Conlath. Where can I find thy peace, Cuthona, lovely maid !

⁴ *The billows still tremble on the deep. They seem to fear the blast. Go view the settling sea.*] POPE'S *Iliad*, vii. 73. Partly quoted by Macpherson.

The waves scarce heave, the face of ocean sleeps,
And a still horror saddens all the deeps :
Thus, in thick order, settling all around, &c.

CU-THONA ⁵.

A distant steep bends over the sea, with aged trees and mossy rocks. The billow rolls at its feet. On its side is the dwelling of roes. The people call it Mora. There the towers of my love arise ⁶. There Conlath looks over the sea for his only love. The daughters of the chace returned. He beheld their downcast eyes. "Where is the daughter of Rumar?" But they answered not. My peace dwells on Mora, son of the distant land !

⁵ Cu-thona, *the mournful sound of the waves* ; a poetical name given her on account of her *mourning* to the *sound* of the *waves* : Her name, in tradition, is Gorm-huil, *the blue-eyed maid*. MACPHERSON.

Inis-thona, I-thona, Cu-thona, Oi-thona, Fearg-thon, Car-thon, Lar-thon, Tromathon, Berra-then, Gormhuil, Gormal, Cormalo, Colmar, Mora, Lora, Sora, &c. &c. are all names of the same coinage. But Cuthona signifies merely the *voice of the waves* (*Cuth-Thon*).

⁶ *The people call it Mora. There the towers of my love arise.*] In the first edition "The people call it *Ardven*. There the towers of *Mora* arise." But *Mora* has been substituted throughout for *Ardven* ; from a recollection, perhaps, that the latter, which in Comala and Caros is placed in Stirlingshire, near Carron, could not well be transferred to the sea-coast on the west of Scotland. *Ardven* itself is a name never heard of in Scotland.

TOSCAR.

Cuthona shall return to her peace ; to the towers of generous Conlath. He is the friend of Toscar ! I have feasted in his halls ! Rise, ye gentle breezes of Erin. Stretch my sails toward Mora's shores. Cuthona shall rest on Mora : but the days of Toscar must be sad. I shall sit in my cave in the field of the sun. The blast will rustle in my trees. I shall think it is Cuthona's voice. But she is distant far, in the halls of the mighty Conlath !

CUTHONA.

Ha ! what cloud is that ? It carries the ghosts of my fathers. I see the skirts of their robes, like grey and watry mist. When shall I fall, O Rumar ? Sad Cuthona foresees her death. Will not Conlath behold me, before I enter the narrow house ?

OSSIAN.

He shall behold thee, O maid. He comes along the heaving sea. The death of Toscar is dark on his spear. A wound is in his side ! He is pale at the cave of Thona. He shews his ghastly wound⁷. Where art thou with thy tears,

⁷ *He is pale at the cave of Thona. He shews his ghastly wound.*] *Æneid*, i. 357. Quoted by Macpherson.

Cuthona? The chief of Mora dies. The vision grows dim on my mind. I behold the chiefs no more! But, O ye bards of future times, remember the fall of Conlath with tears. He fell before his day⁸. Sadness darkened in his hall. His mother looked to his shield on the wall, and it was bloody⁹! She knew that her hero fell. Her sorrow was heard on Mora. Art thou pale on thy rock, Cuthona, beside the fallen chiefs? Night comes, and day returns; but none appears to raise their tomb. Thou frightenest the screaming fowls away¹⁰. Thy tears for ever flow.

Ipsa sed in somnis inhumati venit imago,
Conjugis, ora modis attollens *pallida* miris
Crudeles aras, *trajectaque* pectora ferro
Nudavit.

⁸ *He fell before his day.*] *Æneid*, iv. 620. *Sed cadat ante diem.* Id. 696. Quoted by Macpherson.

Nam quia nec fato, merita nec morte peribat,
Sed misera *ante diem.*

⁹ It was the opinion of the times, that the arms left by the heroes at home, became bloody the very instant their owners were killed, though at ever so great a distance. MACPHERSON.

¹⁰ *Art thou pale on thy rock, Cuthona—Night comes, and day returns---Thou frightenest the screaming fowls away.*] The situation of Cuthona is like that of Rizpah, Saul's mistress, who sat by her sons after they had been hanged by the Gibeonites.

Thou art pale as a watry cloud, that rises from
a lake !

The sons of green Selma came. They found
Cuthona cold. They raised a tomb over the
heroes. She rests at the side of Conlath. Come
not to my dreams, O Conlath ! Thou hast re-
ceived thy fame. Be thy voice far distant from
my hall, that sleep may descend at night. O
that I could forget my friends ; till my foot-
steps should cease to be seen ! till I come among
them with joy ! and lay my aged limbs in the
narrow house !

Macpherson, 1st edit. So like, that the passages are almost
identical.

“And Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, took sackcloth, and
spread it for her upon the *rock*, from the beginning of harvest
until water dropped upon them out of heaven, and suffered nei-
ther the *birds of the air* to rest on them by *day*, nor the beasts
of the field by *night*.” 2 *Samuel*, xxi. 10.

CARTHON :

A POEM.

ARGUMENT.

THIS poem is complete, and the subject of it, as of most of Ossian's compositions, tragical. In the time of Comhal, the son of Trathal, and father of the celebrated Fingal, Clessammor, the son of Thaddu, and brother of Morna, Fingal's mother, was driven by a storm into the river Clyde, on the banks of which stood Balclutha, a town belonging to the Britons between the walls. He was hospitably received by Reuthamir, the principal man in the place, who gave him Moina, his only daughter, in marriage. Reuda, the son of Cormo, a Briton who was in love with Moina, came to Reuthamir's house, and behaved haughtily towards Clessammor. A quarrel ensued, in which Reuda was killed; the Britons, who attended him, pressed so hard on Clessammor, that he was obliged to throw himself into the Clyde, and swim to his ship. He hoisted sail; and the wind being favourable, bore him out to sea. He often endeavoured to return, and carry off his beloved Moina by night; but the wind continuing contrary, he was forced to desist.

Moina, who had been left with child by her husband, brought forth a son, and died soon after.---Reuthamir named the child Carthon, *i. e. the murmur of waves*, from the storm which carried off Clessammor, his father, who was supposed to have been cast away. When Carthon was three years old,

Comhal, the father of Fingal, in one of his expeditions against the Britons, took and burnt Balclutha. Reuthamir was killed in the attack ; and Carthon was carried safe away by his nurse, who fled farther into the country of the Britons. Carthon, coming to man's estate, was resolved to revenge the fall of Balclutha on Comhal's posterity. He set sail from the Clyde, and falling on the coast of Morven, defeated two of Fingal's heroes, who came to oppose his progress. He was, at last, unwittingly killed by his father Clessammor, in a single combat. This story is the foundation of the present poem, which opens on the night preceding the death of Carthon, so that what passed before is introduced by way of episode. The poem is addressed to Malvina, the daughter of Toscar. **MACPHERSON.**

CARTHON:

A POEM.

A TALE of the times of old ! The deeds of days
of other years !

The murmur of thy streams, O Lora, brings
back the memory of the past. The sound of thy
woods, Garmallar, is lovely in mine ear. Dost
thou not behold, Malvina, a rock with its head
of heath ? Three aged pines bend from its face ;
green is the narrow plain at its feet ; there the
flower of the mountain grows, and shakes its
white head in the breeze ¹. The thistle is there

¹ *There the flower of the mountain grows, and shakes its white
head in the breeze.*] *Supra*, Fingal, vi. 9. From Shakspeare,
Cymbeline, iv. 2.

alone, shedding its aged beard². Two stones, half sunk in the ground, shew their heads of moss³. The deer of the mountain avoids the place; for he beholds a dim ghost standing there⁴. The mighty lie, O Malvina, in the narrow plain of the rock.

As gentle
As zephyrs blowing below the violet,
Not wagging his sweet head.

² *The thistle is there alone, shedding its aged beard.*] MASON'S *Elfrida*.

Like the light down upon *the thistle's beard*,
Which every breeze may part.

³ *Two stones, half sunk in the ground, shew their heads of moss.*] *Supra*, Battle of Lora, ²; from MACPHERSON'S *Night-piece*.

A tomb its dreary honour *shews*,
Three stones erect their heads of moss;
A bust *half sunk* in earth appears;
The rude remains of former years.

⁴ It was the opinion of the times, that deer saw the ghosts of the dead. To this day, when *beasts suddenly start* without any apparent cause, the vulgar think that they *see* the spirits of the deceased. MACPHERSON.

The note is from Martin: "That *horses* (&c.) *see* the *second sight*, is plain from their violent and *sudden starting* when the rider, or seer in company with him, *sees* a vision of any kind by night or day." *Western Isles*, 306. But the opinion of the times, *that deer saw the ghosts of the dead*, was adopted, like the custom of Israel (*Lora*, ¹⁹), from Scripture. "And the *ass saw the angel* of the Lord *standing* in the way; and the ass *turned aside* out of the way---and the angel of the Lord went

A tale of the times of old ! the deeds of days
of other years !

Who comes from the land of strangers, with
his thousands around him ⁵ ? the sun-beam pours
its bright stream before him ; his hair meets the
wind of his hills. His face is settled from war.
He is calm, as the evening beam that looks from
the cloud of the west ⁶, on Cona's silent vale.
Who is it but Comhal's son ⁷, the king of mighty

further, and *stood in a narrow place,*" &c. *Numbers*, xxii. 23.
Or, "The deer of the mountain *avoids the place* ; for he beholds
a dim *ghost standing there.*"

⁵ Who comes from the land of strangers, with his thousands
around him.] *Supra*, Comala, ¹⁴. "*Who is this that cometh out*
of the wilderness, like pillars of smoke." *Song of Solomon*, iii. 6.
"*Who is this that cometh from Edom, with died garments from*
Bosrah ; this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the
greatness of his strength." *Isaiah*, lxiii. 1. Or, "With his thou-
sands around him ; the sun-beam pours its bright stream before
him."

⁶ *Calm as the evening beam, that looks from the cloud of the*
west.] *Par. Lost*, ii. 492.

If chance the radiant sun, with farewell sweet,
Extend his *evening beam*.

Id. iv. 150.

On which the sun more glad impressed his beams,
Than in fair *evening clouds*.

⁷ Fingal returns here, from an expedition against the Ro-
mans, which was celebrated by Ossian in a poem called *The*
Strife of Crona. MACPHERSON.

deeds ! He beholds his hills with joy, he bids a thousand voices rise. “Ye have fled over your fields, ye sons of the distant land ! The king of the world sits in his hall, and hears of his people’s flight. He lifts his red eye of pride ; he takes his father’s sword. Ye have fled over your fields, sons of the distant land !”

Such were the words of the bards, when they came to Selma’s halls. A thousand lights⁸ from the strangers’ land arose, in the midst of the people. The feast is spread around ; the night passed away in joy. “Where is the noble Clessammor ?” said the fair-haired Fingal. “Where is the brother of Morna, in the hour of my joy ? Sul-len and dark he passes his days in the vale of echoing Lora : but, behold, he comes from the hill, like a steed in his strength⁹, who finds his companions in the breeze ; and tosses his bright mane in the wind¹⁰. Blessed be the soul of Clessammor : Why so long from Selma ?”

⁸ Probably wax-lights ; which are often mentioned as carried, among other booty, from the Roman province. MACPHERSON. *Supra*, Fingal, vi. 2.

⁹ *Like a steed in his strength.*] “Hast thou given the *horse strength* ?” *Job*, xxxi. 19. “He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his *strength*.” *Id.* 21. Quoted by Macpherson.

¹⁰ *Who finds his companions in the breeze, and tosses his*

“Returns the chief,” said Clessammor, “in the midst of his fame? Such was the renown of Comhal in the battles of his youth. Often did we pass over Carun to the land of the strangers: our swords returned, not unstained with blood”: nor did the kings of the world rejoice. Why do I remember the times of our war? My hair is mixed with grey. My hand forgets to bend the bow: I lift a lighter spear. O that my joy would return, as when I first beheld the maid; the white-bosomed daughter of strangers, Moina¹², with the dark-blue eyes!”

“Tell,” said the mighty Fingal, “the tale of thy

bright mane in the wind.] POPE’S *Iliad*, vi. 656. Quoted by Macpherson.

His head now freed, he *tosses* to the skies,
And *mane* *dishevell’d* o’er his shoulders flies;
He *snuffs* the *females* on the distant plain,
And *springs exulting* to the fields again.

¹¹ Our swords returned not, *unstained with blood.*] “From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty.” 2 Samuel, i. 22.

¹² Moina, *soft in temper and person.* We find the British names in this poem derived from the Gaelic, which is a proof that the ancient language of the whole island was one and the same. MACPHERSON.

Moinic, daughter of the druid Dill. Toland, 55. *Supra*, Fingal, i. 36.

youthful days. Sorrow, like a cloud on the sun, shades the soul of Clessammor¹³. Mournful are thy thoughts, alone, on the banks of the roaring Lora. Let us hear the sorrow of thy youth, and the darkness of thy days ! ”

“ It was in the days of peace,” replied the great Clessammor, “ I came, in my bounding ship, to Balclutha’s¹⁴ wall of towers. The winds had roared behind my sails, and Clutha’s¹⁵ streams received my dark-bosomed ship. Three days I remained in Reuthámir’s halls, and saw his daughter, that beam of light. The joy of the shell went round, and the aged hero gave the fair. Her breasts were like foam on the wave, and her eyes like stars of light : her hair was dark as the

¹³ *Sorrow, like a cloud on the sun, shades the soul of Clessammor.*] Lora, ¹⁵; from YOUNG’S *Night Thoughts*, viii.

Our dying friends *come o’er* us like a *cloud*,
To damp our brainless ardours.

¹⁴ Balclutha, *i. e.* the town of Clyde ; probably the *Alcluth* of Bede. MACPHERSON.

See Dissertation on the supposed authenticity of Ossian’s Poems.

¹⁵ Clutha, or Cluäth, the Gaelic name of the river Clyde. The signification of the word is *bending*, in allusion to the winding course of that river. From Clutha is derived its Latin name. Glotta. MACPHERSON.

raven's wing : her soul was generous and mild.
My love for Moina was great : my heart poured forth in joy.

“ The son of a stranger came ; a chief who loved the white-bosomed Moina. His words were mighty in the hall ; he often half-unsheathed his sword. Where, said he, is the mighty Comhal, the restless wanderer¹⁶ of the heath ? Comes he, with his host, to Balclutha, since Clessammor is so bold ? My soul, I replied, O warrior ! burns in a light of its own. I stand without fear in the midst of thousands, though the valiant are distant far. Stranger ! thy words are mighty ; for Clessammor is alone. But my sword trembles by my side, and longs to glitter in my hand. Speak no more of Comhal, son of the winding Clutha !

¹⁶ The word in the original, here rendered by *restless wanderer*, is *Scuta*, which is the true origin of the *Scoti* of the Romans ; an opprobrious name imposed by the Britons on the Caledonians, on account of the continual incursions into their country. MACPHERSON.

The only Earse word is *Scuti* ; from the English *scout*, like *Spiothoire*, a *spy* ; and *Cluath*, bending, in the preceding note, is to be found in no Earse or Irish dictionary whatsoever. It is needless to add, that the name of *Scots* was appropriated to Ireland, the original *Scotia*, but was never bestowed on the ancient Caledonians.

“The strength of his pride arose. We fought ; he fell beneath my sword. The banks of Clutha heard his fall ; a thousand spears glittered around. I fought : the strangers prevailed : I plunged into the stream of Clutha. My white sails rose over the waves, and I bounded on the dark-blue sea. Moina came to the shore, and rolled the red eye of her tears : her loose hair flew on the wind ; and I heard her mournful, distant cries. Often did I turn my ship ! but the winds of the east prevailed. Nor Clutha ever since have I seen, nor Moina of the dark brown hair. She fell in Balclutha ; for I have seen her ghost. I knew her as she came through the dusky night, along the murmur of Lora : she was like the new moon, seen through the gathered mist¹⁷ :

¹⁷ *I knew her as she came through the dusky night, like the new moon seen through the gathered mist.*] From the appearance of Dido's ghost in VIRGIL, *Æneid*, vi. 451. Quoted by Macpherson.

Errabat sylva in magna : quam Troius heros
Ut primum juxta stetit, agnovitque per umbram
Obscuram ; qualem primo qui surgere mense
Aut videt, aut vidisse putat per nubila lunam.

Whom when the Trojan hero hardly *knew*,
Obscure in shades, and with a doubtful view,

when the sky pours down its flaky snow, and
the world is silent and dark¹⁸.

Doubtful as he who runs through dusky night,
Or thinks he sees the moon's uncertain light.

DRYDEN.

Nor are these passages in Virgil original. *Agnovitque per umbram obscuram*; I knew her as she came through the dusky night; is from APOLLONIUS RHODIUS, i. 1254.

Εἶ δέ μιν Εἶνῳ

ΣΠΕΡΧΟΜΕΝΟΝ μετὰ νηῶ διὰ ΚΝΕΦΑΣ.

Qualem primo qui surgere mense, Aut videt, aut vidisse putat
per nubila lunam; "like the new moon seen through the gathered
mist:" from the distant glimpse which Lynceus obtained of
Hercules at the extremity of the earth. *Id.* iv. 1479.

Τὼς ἰδέειν, ὥς τις τε ΝΕΩ ἐνι 'ΗΜΑΤΙ ΜΗΝΗΝ

"Η ΙΔΕΝ, ἣ ἰδοκῆσεν ἑπαχλύσσαν ἰδέσθαι.

which our translator probably consulted among the parallel
passages cited by the commentators upon Virgil. But that
which is imitation in Virgil, is invention in Ossian.

¹⁸ *The gathered mist, when the sky pours down its flaky
snow, and the world is silent and dark.*] This fine improvement
upon Virgil's comparison of the ghost of Dido to the new moon,
is an additional imitation from THOMSON'S *Winter*.

To snow congealed,

Heavy they roll their fleecy world along,
And the sky saddens with the gathered storm.
Through the hush'd air the whitening shower descends,
At first thin wav'ring; till at last the flakes
Fall broad, and wide, and fast, dimming the day.

The gathered storm with which the sky saddens, when, congealed
to snow, the fleecy world descends in flakes through the hush-
ed air, dimming the day, is thus, by the transposition of epi-

Raise¹⁹, ye bards, said the mighty Fingal, the praise of unhappy Moina. Call her ghost, with your songs, to our hills ; that she may rest with the fair of Morven, the sun-beams of other days, the delight of heroes of old. I have seen the walls²⁰ of Balclutha, but they were desolate.

thets so frequent in Ossian, converted into the “*gathered mist, when the sky pours down its flaky snow, and the world is silent and dark.*” The whole simile is exquisitely picturesque; and nothing is omitted but the point of resemblance between the doubtful appearance of a ghost, and that of the new moon seen obscurely through clouds (*aut videt aut vidisse putat*), which would have betrayed the imitation.

¹⁹ The title of this poem, in the original, is *Duan na nlaoi*, i. e. *The Poem of the Hymns*: probably on account of its many digressions from the subject, all which are in a lyric measure, as this song of Fingal. Fingal is celebrated by the Irish historians for his wisdom in making laws, his poetical genius, and his foreknowledge of events. O’Flaherty goes so far as to say, that Fingal’s laws were extant in his own time. MACPHERSON.

Duan, a rhyme or poem, is seemingly a corruption of the English word *tune*; *laoi* is literally a *lay*; and O’Flaherty’s assertion (*Ogygia*, 338.) that Fingal’s laws were extant in his own time, is certainly not more extravagant than Macpherson’s, that Ossian’s poems are extant in ours.

²⁰ The reader may compare this passage with the three last verses of the 13th chapter of Isaiah, where the prophet foretells the destruction of Babylon. MACPHERSON, 1st edit.

“It shall not be inhabited, neither shall it be *dwelt* in from generation to generation.—But wild beasts of the desert shall

The fire had resounded in the halls: and the voice of the people is heard no more. The stream of Clutha was removed from its place by the fall of the walls. The thistle shook, there, its lonely head: the moss whistled to the wind. The fox looked out, from the windows²¹, the

lie there; and their *houses* shall be full of doleful creatures: and the owl shall *dwell* there; and the wild beasts of the desert shall cry in their *desolate houses*." Isaiah xiii. 20. "I have seen the walls of Balclutha, but they were *desolate*.—*Desolate* is the *dwelling* of Moina; silence is in the *house* of her fathers." "Because of the mountain of Zion which is *desolate*; the foxes walk on it." *Lament*. v. 7.

²¹ *The fox looked out from the windows.*] "The cormorant and the bittern shall lodge in the upper lintels of it; their voice shall sing in the *windows*." Zeph. ii. 14. But the image of the fox, so descriptive of the desolation of Balclutha, and apparently so original, is from *Windsor Forest*, 67.

The levelled towns with weeds are covered o'er;
The hollow winds through naked temples roar;
Round broken columns *clasping ivy* twined;
O'er heaps of ruins stalked the stately hind;
The *fox obscene* to gaping tombs retires,
And savage howlings fill the sacred quires.

These verses were first imitated by MACPHERSON, in his *Elegy on the Death of Marshal Keith*.

Wild ivy creeps along the mouldering walls,
And with each gust of wind a fragment falls;
While *birds obscene* at noon of night deplore,
Where mighty heroes kept the watch before.

"*Wild ivy creeps*," and "the *birds obscene*," are concealed imi-

rank grass of the wall waved round its head. Desolate is the dwelling of Moina, silence is in the house of her fathers. Raise the song of mourning, O bards, over the land of strangers. They have but fallen before us: for, one day, we must fall. Why dost thou build the hall, son of the winged days ²²? Thou lookest from thy towers to-day; yet a few years, and the blast of the desert comes ²³; it howls in thy empty

tations of the clasping ivy and the fox obscene. But the original image was restored in Ossian. On consulting the desolation of Nineveh for the description of the fallen Balclutha, "the fox looked out from the windows," was happily substituted for the cormorant and the bittern that sung in the windows; and "wild ivy creeps along the mouldering wall," was converted into "The rank grass of the wall waved round his head."

²² *Why dost thou build thy hall, thou son of the winged days.*] "Wo unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong,---that sayeth unto himself I will build me a wide house and large chambers." *Jeremiah*, xxii. 13.

²³ *Yet a few years and the blast of the desert comes.*] From THOMSON'S imitation of *Job*. "When a few years are come, then I will go the way whence I shall not return." lxvi. 22.

Pass some few years

Thy flowering spring, thy summer's ardent strength,
Thy sober autumn fading into age,
And pale concluding winter comes at last,
To shut the scene. *Winter.*

which JOHNSON has not disdained to imitate. "Consider

court²⁴, and whistles round thy half-worn shield.
 And let the blast of the desert come, we shall
 be renowned in our day ! The mark of my arm
 shall be in battle ; my name in the song of bards.
 Raise the song ; send round the shell : let joy
 be heard in my hall. When thou, sun of hea-
 ven, shalt fail ! if thou shalt fail, thou mighty
 light ! if thy brightness is for a season, like Fin-
 gal, our fame shall survive thy beams²⁵ !

Ajut, *a few summer days, and a few winter nights, and the life
 of man is at an end.*" *Rambler*, No. 166.

²⁴ *It howls in thy empty court.*] Windsor Forest, *supra* ²¹.

The hollow winds through naked temples roar ;——

And savage *howlings* fill the sacred quires.

But, "it howls in thy empty court," and in the *Night piece*,

With every blast the fragments fall ;

And *winds* are *blustering* in the hall :

are both from *Neptune's Address to the Winds* in DRYDEN'S
Virgil, *Æn.* i. 200.

There let him reign the jailor of the winds,——

And boast and *bluster* in his *empty hall*.

²⁵ When thou, sun of heaven, shalt fail ! if thou shalt fail,
thou mighty light ! if thy brightness is for a season, like Fingal ;
our fame shall survive thy beams.] Such was the song of Fin-
 gal ; and, as the composition of Ossian is a mere cento ; this
 first intimation, that the sun himself is but for a season, con-
 tains a strange imitation of the *Rape of the Lock*.

When those fair suns shall set, as set they must,

And all those tresses shall be laid in dust,

Such was the song of Fingal, in the day of his joy. His thousand bards leaned forward from their seats, to hear the voice of the king. It was like the music of harps on the gale of the spring. Lovely were thy thoughts, O Fingal ! why had not Ossian the strength of thy soul ? But thou standest alone, my father ! who can equal the king of Selma ?

The night passed away in song ; morning returned in joy. The mountains shewed their grey heads ; the blue face of ocean smiled. The white wave is seen tumbling round the distant rock ; a mist rose, slowly, from the lake. It came, in the figure of an aged man, along the silent plain. Its large limbs did not move in steps ; for a ghost supported it in mid air ²⁶. It

This lock the muse shall *consecrate to fame*,
And 'midst the stars inscribe Belinda's name.

Belinda's name, when inscribed amidst the stars, might indeed survive those fair suns, her eyes ; but Fingal's fame, surviving the very sunbeams of heaven, is such vain-glorious bombast as was reserved for the Celtic muse of imitation to produce.

²⁶ *Its large limbs did not move in steps ; for a ghost supported it in mid air.*] *Par. Lost*, viii. 300.

So saying, by the hand he took me *raised*,
And over fields and waters, as in *air*,
Smooth-sliding without *step*.

came towards Selma's hall, and dissolved in a shower of blood ²⁷.

The king alone beheld the sight; he foresaw the death of the people. He came, in silence, to his hall; and took his father's spear. The mail rattled on his breast. The heroes rose around. They looked, in silence, on each other, marking the eyes of Fingal. They saw battle in his face: the death of armies on his spear. A thousand shields, at once, are placed on their arms; they drew a thousand swords. The hall of Selma brightened around. The clang of arms ascends. The grey dogs howl in their place. No word is among the mighty chiefs. Each marked the eyes of the king; and half assumed his spear.

“Sons of Morven,” begun the king, “this is no time to fill the shell. The battle darkens near us; death hovers over the land. Some ghost, the friend of Fingal, has forewarned us of the foe. The sons of the stranger come from the

²⁷ *And dissolved in a shower of blood.*] POPE'S *Iliad*, x. 69.; xvi. 559.

Then touched with grief, the weeping heavens *distill'd*
A shower of blood o'er all the fatal field.

darkly-rolling sea. For, from the water, came the sign of Morven's gloomy danger. Let each assume his heavy spear, each gird on his father's sword. Let the dark helmet rise on every head ; the mail pour its lightening from every side. The battle gathers like a storm ; soon shall ye hear the roar of death ²⁸."

The hero moved on before his host, like a cloud before a ridge of green fire ; when it pours on the sky of night, and mariners foresee

²⁸ Let each *assume his heavy spear.*] *Iliad*, ii. 382. quoted by Macpherson.

Εὖ μὲν τις ΔΟΡΥ θηξάσθω, εὖ δ' ἀσπίδα θέσθω.

His *sharpened spear* let every Grecian wield,

And every Grecian fix his brazen shield.

POPE.

" *Each gird on his father's sword. Let the dark helmet rise on every head ; the mail pour its lightning from every side. The battle gathers like a storm ; soon shall ye hear the roar of death.*" From *Par. Lost*, vi. 541. Quoted also by Macpherson.

Let each

His *adamantine coat gird well*, and *each*

Fit well his *helm*, gripe fast his orbed shield,

Borne even on high : for this day will *pour* down,

If I conjecture aught, no drizzling shower,

But *rattling storm* of arrows barbed with fire.

Our translator discovered the original in Homer, from Newton's observation on the parallel passage or imitation in Milton.

a storm²⁹. On Cona's rising heath they stood : the white-bosomed maids beheld them above like a grove ; they foresaw the death of the youth, and looked towards the sea with fear. The white wave deceived them for distant sails ; the tear is on their cheek ! The sun rose on the sea, and we beheld a distant fleet. Like the mist of ocean they came : and poured their youth upon the coast. The chief was among them, like the stag in the midst of the herd. His shield is studded with gold ; stately strode the king of spears. He moved towards Selma ; his thousands moved behind.

“ Go, with a song of peace,” said Fingal, “ go, Ullin, to the king of swords. Tell him that we are mighty in war ; that the ghosts of our foes are many. But renowned are they who have feasted in my halls ! they shew the arms³⁰ of

²⁹ *A ridge of green fire, when it pours on the sky of night, and mariners foresee a storm.] Par. Lost, iv. 557.*

Swift as a shooting star

In autumn thwarts the *night*, when vapours fired

Impress the air, and shews the *mariner*

From what point of his compass to beware

Impetuous winds.

³⁰ It was a custom among the ancient Scots, to *exchange arms* with their *guests*, and *those arms* were *preserved* long in

my fathers in a foreign land : the sons of the strangers wonder, and bless the friends of Morven's race ; for our names have been heard afar ; the kings of the world shook in the midst of their host."

Ullin went with his song. Fingal rested on his spear : he saw the mighty foe in his armour : he blest the stranger's son. " How stately art thou, son of the sea !" said the king of woody Morven ; " Thy sword is a beam of fire by thy side : thy spear is a pine that defies the storm.

the different *families*, as *monuments* of the *friendship* which subsisted between their *ancestors*. MACPHERSON.

POPE's *Iliad* vi. 267.

" Know, chief, our grandsires have been *guests* of old."
 " The laws of hospitality were anciently held in great veneration. The *friendship contracted hereby* was so sacred, that they preferred it to all the bands of consanguinity and alliance ; and accounted it obligatory even to the third and fourth generation.—We here see Diomed and Glaucus agreeing not to be enemies during the whole course of the war, only because their *grandfathers* had been mutual *guests*.---'They preserved in their *families* the *presents* which had been made on these occasions, as obliged to transmit to their children the *memorials* of this *right of hospitality*.' *Id.* Thus the *custom* among the ancient Scots, for which the translator vouches, is almost literally transcribed from Pope's note in the *exchange of arms* between Diomed and Glaucus, whose ancestors had also interchanged presents, as *guests* of old.

The varied face of the moon is not broader than thy shield ³¹. Ruddy is thy face of youth ! soft the ringlets of thy hair ! But this tree may fall ; and his memory be forgot ! The daughter of the stranger will be sad, looking to the rolling sea : the children will say, “ We see a ship ; perhaps it is the king of Balclutha.” The tear starts from their mother’s eye. Her thoughts are of him who sleeps in Morven !”

Such were the words of the king, when Ullin came to the mighty Carthon : he threw down the spear before him ; he raised the song of peace. “ Come to the feast of Fingal, Carthon, from the rolling sea ! partake of the feast of the king, or lift the spear of war ! The ghosts of our foes are many : but renowned are the friends of Morven ! Behold that field, O Carthon ; many a green hill rises there, with mossy stones and

³¹ *Thy sword is a beam of fire by thy side : thy spear is a pine, &c. The varied face of the moon is not broader than thy shield.*] Repetitions from Fingal. The last is a frequent imitation ; from THOMSON’S *Autumn*.

Meanwhile the moon——

Shews her *broad visage* in the crimsoned east,

Turned to the sun direct, her *spotted disk*, &c.

But his sword, a beam of fire by his side, is quite ludicrous.

rustling grass : these are the tombs of Fingal's foes, the sons of the rolling sea !”

“ Dost thou speak to the weak in arms !” said Carthon, “ bard of the woody Morven ? Is my face pale for fear, son of the peaceful song ? Why, then, dost thou think to darken my soul with the tales of those who fell ? My arm has fought in battle ; my renown is known afar. Go to the feeble in arms, bid them yield to Fingal. Have not I seen the fallen Balclutha ? And shall I feast with Comhal's son ? Comhal ! who threw his fire in the midst of my father's hall³² ! I was young, and knew not the cause, why the virgins wept. The columns of smoke pleased mine eye, when they rose above my walls³³ !

³² *Comhal ! who threw his fire in the midst of my father's hall.*] Literally from Pope's note, “ or if we take it in the other sense, simply as a *fire thrown into a town* by the enemies who assault it.” POPE'S *Iliad* xxi. 607. n. See next note.

³³ The columns of smoke pleased mine eye, when they rose above my walls !] *Iliad*, xxi. 522.

᾽Ως δ' ὅτε ΚΑΙΗΝΟΣ ἰὼν εἰς οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ΙΚΑΝΕΙ
ΑΣΤΕΟΣ ΑΙΘΟΜΕΝΟΙΟ.

As when avenging flames, with fury driven
On guilty towns, exert the wrath of heaven,
The pale inhabitants some fall, some *fly*.

POPE.

I often looked back, with gladness, when my friends fled along the hill. But when the years of my youth came on, I beheld the moss of my fallen walls: my sigh arose with the morning, and my tears descended with night³⁴. Shall I not fight, I said to my soul, against the children of my foes? And I will fight, O bard! I feel the strength of my soul."

His people gathered around the hero, and drew, at once, their shining swords. He stands, in the midst, like a pillar of fire; the tear half-starting from his eye; for he thought of the fal-

"When my friends *fled* along the hill;" and "the columns of *smoke rose* above my walls," is more faithful to the original than Pope's translation. But "I was young, and knew not the cause why the virgins wept. The *columns* of smoke *pleased mine eye*;" and, "I often looked back with joy," are fine additions of Macpherson's own, of which the radical idea may be found in the *Cave*, written in the Highlands.

Some rural maid, with apron full,

Brings fuel to the homely flame;

I see the smoky columns roll,

And through the chinky hut the beam.

A better picture was never given, of a country wench carrying an apron-full of peats to the fire, with the sudden smoke and flame of such combustible fuel.

³⁴ *My sigh arose with the morning, and my tears descended with night.*] *Infra, Croma.* A frequent imitation.

len Balclutha ; the crowded pride of his soul arose. Sidelong he looked up to the hill, where our heroes shone in arms ; the spear trembled in his hand : bending forward, he seemed to threaten the king.

“ Shall I,” said Fingal to his soul, “ meet, at once, the youth ? Shall I stop him, in the midst of his course, before his fame shall arise ? But the bard, hereafter, may say, when he sees the tomb of Carthon ; Fingal took his thousands to battle, before the noble Carthon fell. No : bard of the times to come ! thou shalt not lessen Fingal’s fame. My heroes will fight the youth, and Fingal behold the war. If he overcomes, I rush, in my strength, like the roaring stream of Cona. Who, of my chiefs, will meet the son of the rolling sea ? Many are his warriors on the coast : and strong is his ashen spear !”

Cathul³⁵ rose, in his strength, the son of the

³⁵ Cath-’huil, *the eye of battle*. MACPHERSON.

Cathul and *Cathula*, king of Innistore, was, I am now convinced, adopted by Macpherson, not from any traditionary account of Ketil, the Norwegian prince of the Hebudes, (see *Dissertation on the supposed authenticity of Ossian’s Poems*) but from Cathal, or Catholus Macvurich, whose name is prefixed to many of the songs in the *Red Book of Clanronald*, and in another MS. pos-

mighty Lormar: three hundred youths attend the chief, the race of his native streams. Feeble was his arm against Carthon; he fell, and his heroes fled. Connal resumed the battle, but he broke his heavy spear: he lay bound on the field: Carthon pursued his people.

“Clessammor!” said the king³⁶ of Morven,

sessed by Macpherson. The original name is not Charles, as explained to Mr. Astle, but Gathelus, from the fabulous Gathel, the husband of Scota, Pharaoh’s daughter; and is a common name among Clanronald’s tenants, as I am informed by his factor.

³⁶ Fingal did not then know that Carthon was the son of Clessammor. MACPHERSON.

The story of Clessammor and Carthon is taken from the Irish ballad of *Conloch*, whose mother Aife had been gotten with child by Cuthullin, during a visit to Scotland, and Conlath, their son, was afterwards unwittingly slain, on his arrival in Ireland, by his own father in single combat. KEATING. Miss BROOKE’S *Irish Poems*. But the name of *Carthon* is taken from an Irish romance, entitled *Bruighean Charthain*, signifying a house or palace built of quickbeam, (*caorthain*, quickbeam, O’Brian) in which Fingal and his heroes were once enchanted; and which, from the double signification of *Bruighean*, a house, (from the Teutonic *burgh*) or a quarrel, (from the low Latin *briga*, rixa) Macpherson mistook for the *Battle of Carthon*. *Journal des Sçavans*, 1764, p. 852.

From the same ballad of *Conloch*, SMITH, in his *Galic Antiquities*, gives us another fabrication, in Earse and English; the subject of which is Cathula, king of Inistore, killing his son

“where is the spear of thy strength? Wilt thou behold Connal bound; thy friend, at the stream of Lora? Rise, in the light of thy steel, companion of valiant Comhal. Let the youth of Balclutha feel the strength of Morven’s race.” He rose in the strength of his steel, shaking his grizly locks. He fitted the shield to his side; he rushed, in the pride of valour.

Carthon stood on a rock; he saw the hero rushing on. He loved the dreadful joy of his face: his strength, in the locks of age! “Shall I lift that spear,” he said, “that never strikes, but once³⁷, a foe? Or shall I, with the words

Conloch in battle. “From the resemblance between the names of *Cathulla* or *Cuthullin*, (*Cuchullaine* in Earse) and *both* having a son named *Conloch*, many who repeat *this poem*,” says the reverend translator, “in place of *Cathula*, substitute the more familiar appellation of *Cuthullin*.” One object of these notes is to teach veracity to those Celtic bards.

³⁷ *That spear that never strikes but once.*] The *Gathbuilg*, a fatal spear with which Cuthullin was always sure to kill his opponent, and which he threw at last when hard pressed by Conloch. In transferring the *Gathbuilg* from the father to the son, from Cuthullin to Carthon, Macpherson was ignorant that the Irish of old were accustomed to throw the spear with a force which no armour could resist; and that they were equally dexterous in the use of the *Tuath Catha*, or battle-axe. STANIHURST, 42. HARRIS, 52.

of peace, preserve the warrior's life ? Stately are his steps of age ! lovely the remnant of his years ! Perhaps it is the husband of Moina ; the father of car-borne Carthon. Often have I heard, that he dwelt at the echoing stream of Lora."

Such were his words, when Clessammor came, and lifted high his spear. The youth received it on his shield, and spoke the words of peace. " Warrior of the aged locks ! Is there no youth to lift the spear ? Hast thou no son, to raise the shield before his father, to meet the arm of youth ? Is the spouse of thy love no more ? or weeps she over the tombs of thy sons ? Art thou of the kings of men ? What will be the fame of my sword shouldst thou fall ?"

" It will be great, thou son of pride !" begun the tall Clessammor. " I have been renowned in battle ; but I never told my name³⁸ to a foe.

³⁸ To tell one's name to an enemy was reckoned, in those days of heroism, a manifest evasion of fighting him ; for, if it was once known, that friendship subsisted, of old, between the ancestors of the combatants, the battle immediately ceased ; and the ancient amity of their forefathers was renewed. *A man who tells his name to his enemy*, was of old an ignominious term for a coward. MACPHERSON.

According to the Irish legend, Cuthullin had left instructions

Yield to me, son of the wave, then shalt thou know, that the mark of my sword is in many a field." "I never yielded, king of spears!" replied the noble pride of Carthon: "I have also fought in war; I behold my future fame. Despise me not, thou chief of men; my arm, my spear, is strong. Retire among thy friends, let

with Conloch's mother, if she should produce a son, to train him carefully to arms, and to send him to Ireland when arrived at manhood, with three injunctions, still partly observed in that kingdom, never to give the way, never to decline the combat, and never to tell his name to a foe. Cuthullin, therefore, had no means of knowing his son when the latter arrived in Ireland, as a knight-errant, to signalise his valour in single combat. But the adaptation of the ballad to Scotland is attended with gross contradictions. Carthon, like Macpherson's Hunter, preserved by his nurse when Balclutha was burnt by Comhal, must, instead of an unknown youth, have been several years older than Fingal, who was born, says Macpherson, in the midst of battles, on the same day that his father was slain. Fingal knew the king of Balclutha by name, yet was ignorant that Carthon was the son of Clessammor. Clessammor himself, who resided at Lora, close by Glenco where Selma stood, and within fifty miles of Dumbarton, could never find his way back to that place by sea or by land, and had never heard that the king of Balclutha was the grandson of Reuthamir, and the son of Moina, his former wife. And Carthon, when afraid of encountering his father, desires Clessammor to tell his name, as a mark of cowardice, instead of declaring his own name, or demanding explicitly whether his opponent was the husband of Moina or not.

younger heroes fight." "Why dost thou wound my soul," replied Clessammor with a tear? "Age does not tremble on my hand; I still can lift the sword. Shall I fly in Fingal's sight; in the sight of him I love? Son of the sea! I never fled: exalt thy pointed spear."

They fought, like two contending winds, that strive to roll the wave. Carthon bade his spear to err; he still thought that the foe was the spouse of Moina. He broke Clessammor's beamy spear in twain; he seized his shining sword. But as Carthon was binding the chief; the chief drew the dagger of his fathers. He saw the foe's uncovered side; and opened, there, a wound.

Fingal saw Clessammor low: he moved in the sound of his steel. The host stood silent, in his presence; they turned their eyes to the king. He came, like the sullen noise of a storm, before the winds arise: the hunter hears it in the vale, and retires to the cave of the rock³⁹.

³⁹ *Like the sullen noise of a storm before the winds arise. The hunter hears it in the vale, and retires to the cave of the rock.*] From the *Shepherd*, in POPE'S *Iliad*, iv. 321.

He dreads th' *impending storm*, and drives his flock
To the close cover of the *arching rock*.

Carthon stood in his place: the blood is rushing down his side: he saw the coming down of the king; his hopes of fame arose; but pale was his cheek; his hair flew loose, his helmet shook on high: the force of Carthon failed; but his soul was strong.

Fingal beheld the hero's blood; he stopt the uplifted spear. "Yield, king of swords!" said Comhal's son; "I behold thy blood. Thou hast been mighty in battle; and thy fame shall never fade." "Art thou the king so far renowned," replied the car-borne Carthon? "Art thou that light of death, that frightens the kings of the world? But why should Carthon ask? for he is like the stream of his hills; strong as a river, in his course: swift as the eagle of heaven ⁴⁰. O that I had fought with the king; that my fame might be great in song! that the hunter, beholding my tomb, might say, he fought with the mighty Fingal. But Carthon dies unknown; he has poured out his force on the weak."

⁴⁰ Strong as a river in his course; swift as the eagle of heaven.] "They were swifter than eagles; they were stronger than lions." 2 Samuel, i. 23.

“ But thou shalt not die unknown,” replied the king of woody Morven: “ my bards are many, O Carthon, their songs descend to future times. The children of years to come shall hear the fame of Carthon; when they sit round the burning oak, and the night is spent in songs of old. The hunter, sitting in the heath, shall hear the rustling blast; and, raising his eyes, behold the rock where Carthon fell. He shall turn to his son, and show the place where the mighty fought; “ There the king of Balclutha fought, like the strength of a thousand streams.”

Joy rose in Carthon's face: he lifted his heavy eyes. He gave his sword to Fingal, to lie within his hall, that the memory of Balclutha's king might remain in Morven. The battle ceased along the field, the bard had sung the song of peace. The chiefs gathered round the falling Carthon; they heard his words, with sighs. Silent they leaned on their spears, while Balclutha's hero spoke. His hair sighed in the wind, and his voice was sad and low.

“ King of Morven,” Carthon said, “ I fall in the midst of my course. A foreign tomb re-

ceives, in youth, the last of Reuthamír's race. Darkness dwells in Balclutha: the shadows of grief in Crathmo. But raise my remembrance on the banks of Lora: where my fathers dwelt. Perhaps the husband of Moina will mourn over his fallen Carthon." His words reached the heart of Clessammor: he fell, in silence, on his son. The host stood darkened around: no voice is on the plain. Night came, the moon, from the east, looked on the mournful field; but still they stood, like a silent grove that lifts its head on Gormal, when the loud winds are laid, and dark autumn is on the plain.

Three days they mourned above Carthon; on the fourth his father died. In the narrow plain of the rock they lie; a dim ghost defends their tomb. There lovely Moina is often seen; when the sun-beam darts on the rock, and all around is dark. There she is seen, Malvina, but not like the daughters of the hill. Her robes are from the stranger's land; and she is still alone!

Fingal was sad for Carthon; he commanded his bards to mark the day, when shadowy au-

tumn returned ⁴¹: And often did they mark the
 day and sing the hero's praise. "Who comes
 so dark from ocean's roar, like autumn's sha-
 dowy cloud? Death is trembling in his hand!
 his eyes are flames of fire! Who roars along
 dark Lora's heath? Who but Carthon, king of
 swords? The people fall! see! how he strides,
 like the sullen ghost of Morven! But there he
 lies a goodly oak, which sudden blasts over-
 turned! When shalt thou rise, Balclutha's joy!
 When, Carthon, shalt thou arise? Who comes so
 dark from ocean's roar, like autumn's shadowy
 cloud?" Such were the words of the bards, in
 the day of their mourning: Ossian often joined
 their voice; and added to their song. "My
 soul has been mournful for Carthon; he fell in
 the days of his youth: and thou, O Clessam-
 mor! where is thy dwelling in the wind? Has
 the youth forgot his wound? Flies he, on
 clouds, with thee? I feel the sun, O Malvina,
 leave me to my rest. Perhaps they may come

⁴¹ *He commanded his bards to mark the day when shadowy
 autumn returned.] Like GRAY'S Bards.*

*Mark the year and mark the night
 When Severn shall re-echo with affright.*

to my dreams ; I think I hear a feeble voice !
The beam of heaven delights to shine on the
grave of Carthon : I feel it warm around ⁴² !

“ O thou that rollest above ⁴³, round as the

⁴² *I feel the sun, O Malvina, leave me to my rest.---The beam of heaven delights to shine on the grave of Carthon. I feel it warm around.] From Samson Agonistes, 3.*

For yonder bank hath choice of sun and shade
Where I am wont to sit :

but here *I feel amends,*

The breath of heaven fresh blowing, pure and sweet,
With day-spring born ; here *leave me to respire.*

In placing Ossian, like Samson, on a bank that has choice of sun and shade, or where the sun *delights* to shine, the judicious alteration of “ here I feel amends, the breath of heaven fresh blowing,” to “ the beam of heaven. *I feel it warm around,*” was necessary to introduce the subsequent address to the sun.

⁴³ This passage is *something similar* to Satan’s address to the sun, in the fourth book of *Paradise Lost*. MACPHERSON, 1st edit.

“ O thou that rollest above, round as the shield of my fathers !
Whence are thy beams, O sun ! thy everlasting light ? Thou comest forth in thy awful beauty ; the stars hide themselves in the sky ; the moon, cold and pale, sinks in the western wave. But thou thyself movest alone : who can be a companion of thy course.” Par. Lost, iv. 32.

*O thou, that with surpassing lustre crown’d,
Look’st from thy sole dominion like the god
Of this new world ; at whose sight all the stars
Hide their diminished heads ; to thee I call,
But with no friendly voice, and add thy name,
O sun ! to tell thee how I hate thy beams.*

shield of my fathers ! Whence are thy beams,
O sun ! thy everlasting light ? Thou comest
forth, in thy awful beauty ; the stars hide them-

The sun in his *awful beauty* moving *alone*, or with *surpassing lustre* crowned, in *sole* dominion, and the stars that *hide* themselves in the sky, or *hide* their diminished heads at his sight, instead of being *something similar*, are absolutely identical. But as these addresses consist of a laborious accumulation of poetical beauties, the intermediate imitations would almost require a perpetual commentary. *Round as the shield of my fathers*, is from HOME's *Douglas*.

The moon which rose last night, *round as my shield*.
“ *Whence are thy beams, O sun ! thy everlasting light ?* ” is Milton's address to light, in *Paradise Lost*, iii. 1.

Hail, holy *light*, offspring of heaven first-born,
Or of th' Eternal *coeternal beam*,——
Bright effluence of bright essence increate——
Whose fountain who shall tell.

And in Newton's note on the “ effluence of bright essence increate.” “ What the *Wisdom* of Solomon says of *wisdom*, Milton applies to *light*. “ She is a pure *influence* flowing from the glory of the *Almighty* : She is the *brightness* of the *everlasting light*.” *Wisdom*, vii. 25. “ *Whence are thy beams, O sun ! thy everlasting light ?* ” But “ the moon, cold and pale, *sinks* in the *western wave*,” is from Jerom Stone's description of a May morning ; a translation of Gawin Douglas's prologue to the xiiith *Æneid*. See *Carric-Thura*⁸.

Aurora, joyful harbinger of day,
Now from the *skies* had chased the stars away ;
The moon was sunk beneath the *western streams*,
And Venus' orb was shorn of half its beams.

Scots Magazine, 1756.

selves in the sky; the moon, cold and pale, sinks in the western wave. But thou thyself movest alone; who can be a companion of thy course! The oaks of the mountains fall; the mountains themselves decay with years; the ocean shrinks and grows again; the moon herself is lost in heaven: but thou art for ever the same⁴⁴; rejoicing in the brightness of thy

⁴⁴ *The oaks of the mountains fall; the mountains themselves decay with years; the ocean shrinks and grows again; the moon herself is lost in heaven: but thou art for ever the same.*] And afterwards, "Exult then, O sun, in the strength of thy youth! Age is dark and unlovely." The original idea, however much diversified, is from ADDISON's *Cato*.

The stars shall fade away, the sun himself
Grow dim with age, and nature sink in years;
But thou shalt flourish in immortal youth,
Unhurt amidst the war of elements,
The wreck of matter, and the crush of worlds.

That is, "When the world is dark with tempests; when thunder rolls and lightning flies; thou lookest in thy beauty from the clouds, and laughest at the storm." But the variations of imagery require also a comment. "The oaks of the mountains fall; the mountains themselves decay with years;" is a scriptural alteration of *Fingal*, iii. 22. "The oaks resound on their mountains, and the rocks fall down before him." "The ocean shrinks and grows again; the moon herself is lost in heaven," is from VIRGIL, *Georg.* ii. 477.

*Cælique vias et sidera monstrent,
Defectus solis varios, lunæque labores;
Unde tremor terris; qua vi maria alta tumescant
Obicibus ruptis, rursusque in seipsa resident.*

course. When the world is dark with tempests; when thunder rolls, and lightning flies; thou lookest in thy beauty, from the clouds, and laughest at the storm. But to Ossian, thou lookest in vain; for he beholds thy beams no more⁴⁵; whether thy yellow hair flows on the

Teach me the various *labours* of the *moon*;
And whence proceed th' eclipses of the sun;
Why *flowing* tides prevail upon the *main*;
And in what dark recess they *shrink* again;

DRYDEN.

“*Rejoicing in the brightness of thy course*,” and above, “*Thou comest forth in thy awful beauty;—who can be a companion of thy course?*” are all from the Psalmist. “*In the heavens hath he set a tabernacle for the sun*; which is as a bridegroom *coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.*” *Psalm* xix. 5. see n. ⁴⁶. But the *brightness* of his course, is from “*The brightness of everlasting light*,” in Newton’s quotation from the Wisdom of Solomon. *Supra* ⁴³. And “*Thou lookest in thy beauty from the clouds, and laughest at the storm.*” *Id.*

With *surpassing lustre* crowned,
Look’st from thy sole dominion, like the god
Of this new world.

is also from the Psalmist. “*He that sitteth in heaven shall laugh.*” *Psalm* ii. 4. “*He laugheth at the shaking of a spear.*” *Job*, xli. 19.

⁴⁵ But to Ossian thou lookest in vain, for he beholds thy beams no more.] From Milton’s address to light, *Par. Lost*, iii. 2.

But thou
Revisit’st not these eyes, that roll in vain
To find thy piercing ray.

eastern clouds, or thou tremblest at the gates of the west⁴⁶. But thou art perhaps, like me, for a season, thy years will have an end Thou shalt sleep in the clouds, careless of the voice of the morning⁴⁷. Exult then, O sun, in the strength of thy youth⁴⁸ ! Age is dark and unlovely ; it is like the glimmering light of the

⁴⁶ Whether *thy yellow hair flows on the eastern clouds, or thou tremblest at the gates of the west.*] BUCHANAN'S *Psalms*, xix. 5.

*Sive ille Eois fluctibus exserit
Vultus decoros, sponsus uti novus
Auro refulgens, gemineaque
Tempora conspicuus corona :
Seu quum fugacem præcipitans diem
Curru citato tempora dividit,
Artusque viresque impetumque
Centimano similis giganti.*

In the preceding imitation of the 19th Psalm ⁴⁴, our author had consulted Buchanan's translation of the same passage, the very construction of which he has now introduced.

⁴⁷ *Thou shalt sleep in thy clouds, careless of the voice of the morning.*] GRAY'S *Elegy*. A frequent imitation.

*The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.*

⁴⁸ *Age is dark and unlovely.*] MIMNERMUS.

Ἄλλ' ὀλιγοχρόνιον γίγνεται, ὥσπερ ὄναρ
Ἦεν τιμησσοῖα τὸδε ΑΡΤΑΛΕΟΝ καὶ ΑΜΟΡΦΟΝ
ΤΗΡΑΣ.

And I find the same passage transfused, by the druidical Smith, into his Celtic poems. *Sean-Dana*, 244.

moon, when it shines through broken clouds,
and the mist is on the hills; the blast of north
is on the plain, the traveller shrinks in the midst
of his journey ⁴⁹.

⁴⁹ *Like the glimmering light of the moon, when it shines
through broken clouds, and the mist is on the hills;---the travel-
ler shrinks in the midst of his journey.]* *Æneid*, vi. 270.
Quoted by Macpherson.

*Quale per incertam lunam, sub luce maligna
Est iter in sylvis, ubi cælum condidit umbra
Jupiter, et rebus nox abstulit atra colorem.*

Thus wander *travellers* in woods by night,
By the *moon's* doubtful and malignant light;
When Jove in *dusky clouds* involves the skies,
And the faint crescent shoots by fits before his eyes.

DRYDEN.

THE
DEATH OF CUTHULLIN:
A POEM.

ARGUMENT.

CUTHULLIN, after the arms of Fingal had expelled Swaran from Ireland, continued to manage the affairs of that kingdom as the guardian of Cormac, the young king. In the third year of Cuthullin's administration, Torlath, the son of Cantela, rebelled in Connaught; and advanced to Temora to dethrone Cormac. Cuthullin marched against him, came up with him at the lake of Lego, and totally defeated his forces. Torlath fell in battle by Cuthullin's hand; but as he too eagerly pressed on the enemy, he was mortally wounded. The affairs of Cormac, though, for some time, supported by Nathos, fell into confusion at the death of Cuthullin. Cormac himself was slain by the rebel Cairbar; and the re-establishment of the royal family of Ireland by Fingal, furnishes the subject of the epic poem of Temora. MACPHERSON.

The present poem concerns the death of Cuthullin. It is in the original, called *Duan Loch Leigo*, i. e. *The Poem of Lego's Lake*; and is an episode introduced in a great poem, which celebrates the last expedition of Fingal into Ireland. The greatest part of the poem is lost, and nothing remains but some episodes, which a few old people in the north retain on memory. Cuthullin is the most famous champion in the Irish traditions and poems: in them he is always called the redoubtable Cuthullin: and the fables concerning his strength and valour are innumerable. Ossian thought his expedition against the *Firbolg*, or Belgæ of Britain, a subject

fit for an epic poem ; which was extant till of late, and was called, *Tora-na-tana*, or a *Dispute about Possessions*, as the war, which was the foundation of it, was commenced by the British Belgæ who inhabited Ireland, in order to extend their territories. The fragments that remain of this poem are animated with the genuine spirit of Ossian ; so that there can be no doubt that it was of his composition. MACPHERSON, 1st edit.

It appears, then, from this curious passage in the first editions, that the Death of Cuthullin was originally intended for an episode in the Temora, “ which celebrates Fingal’s last expedition into Ireland ; ” and of which the first book only was composed when the present collection of poems was published. But the translator, who had already prepared us, in Inisthona, for an additional epic poem on the exploits of his beloved Oscar and his friends, has here provided for the subsequent appearance, not only of the Temora, but of a fourth epic poem, entitled, the *Tora-na-tana* ; which remains to be discovered, in due time, in the Highlands of Scotland. To remove all doubts, however, of its authenticity, the remaining fragments of this undiscovered poem are animated with the genuine spirit of Macpherson’s Ossian.

THE

DEATH OF CUTHULLIN:

A POEM.

Is the wind on the shield of Fingal? Or is the voice of past times in my hall? Sing on, sweet voice; for thou art pleasant. Thou carriest away my night with joy. Sing on, O Bragela, daughter of car-borne Sorglan!

“It is the white wave of the rock, and not Cuthullin’s sails. Often do the mists deceive me, for the ship of my love! when they rise round some ghost, and spread their grey skirts on the wind. Why dost thou delay thy coming, son of the generous Semo? Four times has autumn returned with its winds, and raised the seas of

Togorma¹, since thou hast been in the roar of battles, and Bragela distant far ! Hills of the isle of mist ! when will ye answer to his hounds ? But ye are dark in your clouds. Sad Bragela calls in vain ! Night comes rolling down. The face of ocean fails. The heath-cock's head is beneath his wing. The hind sleeps with the hart of the desert. They shall rise with morning's light, and feed by the mossy stream. But my tears return with the sun. My sighs come on with the night. When wilt thou come in thine arms, O chief of Erin's wars ?”

Pleasant is thy voice in Ossian's ear, daughter of car-borne Sorglan ! But retire to the hall of shells ; to the beam of the burning oak. Attend to the murmur of the sea ; it rolls at Dunscai's walls. Let sleep descend on thy blue eyes. Let the hero arise in thy dreams ! ².

¹ Togorma, *i. e.* the island of blue waves, one of the Hebrides, was subject to Connal, the son of Caithbat, Cuthullin's friend. He is sometimes called the son of Colgar, from one of that name who was the founder of the family. Connal, a few days before the news of Torlath's revolt came to Temora, had sailed to Togorma, his native isle ; where he was detained, by contrary winds, during the war in which Cuthullin was killed. MACPHERSON. See *Fingal*, i. 17.

² Let the hero arise in thy dreams.] The exordium is in the

Cuthullin sits at Lego's lake, at the dark rolling of waters. Night is around the hero. His thousands spread on the heath. A hundred oaks burn in the midst. The feast of shells is smoking wide. Carril strikes the harp beneath a tree. His grey locks glitter in the beam. The rustling blast of night is near, and lifts his aged hair. His song is of the blue Togorma, and of its chief, Cuthullin's friend ! "Why art thou absent, Connal, in the days of the gloomy storm ? The chiefs of the south have convened, against the car-borne Cormac. The winds detain thy sails. Thy blue waters roll around thee. But Cormac is not alone. The son of Semo fights his wars ! Semo's son his battles fights ! the terror of the stranger ! He that is like the vapour of death,

same extravagant strain with the poem of Conlath and Cuthona. The voice of past times, which, like Urania's voice divine, visits his slumbers nightly, or comes at midnight to Ossian's ear, is, on this occasion, the ghost of Bragela. But Bragela herself is still alive in the song, and awaiting her husband's return, on the fourth autumn after his departure from the isle of Sky ; while Ossian, in conclusion, desires her ghost, in his own hall, to retire to her fireside in Dunscail, and to go to bed and dream of her hero. The dead and the living are thus identified ; and the past and the present are intermixed in the most inextricable confusion.

slowly borne by sultry winds ³. The sun reddens in his presence : The people fall around."

Such was the song of Carril, when a son of the foe appeared. He threw down his pointless spear. He spoke the words of Torlath ! Torlath, chief of heroes, from Lego's sable surge ! He that led his thousands to battle against car-borne Cormac. Cormac, who was distant far, in Temora's echoing halls : he learned to bend the bow of his fathers ; and to lift the spear. Nor long didst thou lift the spear, mildly-shining beam of youth ! death stands dim behind thee, like the darkened half of the moon, behind its growing light ⁴ ! Cuthullin rose before the bard,

³ *Like the vapour of death, slowly borne by sultry winds.*] POPE's *Iliad*, v. 1058. Quoted by Macpherson.

As vapours blown by Auster's sultry breath,

Pregnant with plagues, and shedding seeds of death.

But the vapour of *death*, to which Mars is compared in retiring from battle, exists only in Pope's translation, not in the original.

⁴ *Death stands dim behind thee, like the darkened half of the moon behind its growing light.*] This comparison, which Blair pronounces a very fanciful and uncommon allusion, is another variation of Milton's eclipse. *Par. Lost*, i. 596.

Or from behind the moon,

In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds

On half the nations——

Darkened so, yet shone.

that came from generous Torlath. He offered him the shell of joy. He honoured the son of songs. "Sweet voice of Lego!" he said, "what are the words of Torlath? Comes he to our feast or battle, the car-borne son of Cantela?"

"He comes to thy battle," replied the bard, "to the sounding strife of spears. When morning is grey on Lego, Torlath will fight on the plain. Wilt thou meet him, in thine arms, king of the isle of mist? Terrible is the spear of Torlath! it is a meteor of night. He lifts it, and the people fall! death sits in the lightning of his sword⁵!" "Do I fear," replied Cuthullin, "the spear of car-borne Torlath? He is brave as a thousand heroes; but my soul delights in

'Death stands dim behind thee'---"death sits in the lightning of his sword"---"the steps of death are behind thy sword" (*Infra* 5, 20); and in the Battle of Lora, "Death dimly stalked along by his side," are the common-place personifications of our author's juvenile poem upon Death: and "the darkened half of the moon, behind its growing light," is a mere conceit. The darkened half, instead of encroaching, like death, *from behind*, is diminished, and disappears, *before* the growing light of the moon; and it is only surprising, that such modern personifications, and quaint prettinesses of thought and style, should have ever been mistaken for the simplicity of ancient poetry.

⁵ *Death sits in the lightning of his sword.*] *Supra* 4.

war ! The sword rests not by the side of Cuthullin, bard of the times of old ! Morning shall meet me on the plain, and gleam on the blue arms of Semo's son. But sit thou on the heath, O bard ! and let us hear thy voice. Partake of the joyful shell ; and hear the songs of Temora !"

"This is no time," replied the bard, "to hear the song of joy ; when the mighty are to meet in battle, like the strength of the waves of Lego. Why art thou so dark, Slimora ! with all thy silent woods ! No star trembles on thy top. No moon-beam on thy side. But the meteors of death are there: the grey watry forms of ghosts. Why art thou dark, Slimora ! with thy silent woods?" He retired, in the sound of his song. Carril joined his voice. The music was like the memory of joys that are past, pleasant and mournful to the soul. The ghosts of departed bards heard on Slimora's side. Soft sounds spread along the wood. The silent valleys of night rejoice⁶. So, when he sits in the silence

⁶ *The music is like the memory of joys that are past.—The silent valleys of night rejoice.*] "What a figure," says Blair, "would such imagery and such scenery have made, had they

of the day, in the valley of his breeze, the humming of the mountain bee comes to Ossian's

been presented to us adorned with the sweetness and harmony of the Virgilian numbers." *Dissertation.*

The source of such imagery and scenery may be discovered, not indeed in Virgilian numbers, but in Young's imitation of Blair's *Grave*. To begin with the latter :

The new made *widow* too, I've sometimes spied,
Sad sight ! *slow moving* o'er the prostrate dead.——
Prone, on the lowly grave of the dear man,
She drops ; while *busy meddling memory*,
In barbarous succession, musters up
The *past endearments* of their *softer hours*,
Tenacious of its theme.——

Of joys departed

Not to return, *how painful* the remembrance !

Night Thoughts, Night i.

In every varied *posture*, *place*, and *hour*,
How widowed every thought of every *joy* ;
Thought, *busy thought* ! too *busy* for my *peace* !
Through the dark postern of *time long elapsed*,
Led *softly* by the *stillness* of the *night*,
Led like a murderer (and such it proves !)
Strays (wretched rover !) o'er the *pleasing past* ;
In quest of wretchedness perversely strays ;
And finds all desert now, and meets the *ghosts*
Of my *departed joys*, a numerous train !

"The music is like the *memory* of *joys* that are *past* ; *pleasant* and *mournful* to the soul. The *ghosts* of *departed bards* heard in Slimora's side. *Soft sounds* spread along the woods. The *silent valleys of night* rejoiced."

When in quest of a new comparison for music, Macpherson,

ear⁷ : the gale drowns it in its course ; but the pleasant sound returns again ! *Slant looks the*

who was too well acquainted with Blair's *Grave*, not to recognize Young's imitation, converted "the *memory* of their *past* endearments," and "the remembrance of *joys* departed," into "the *memory* of *joys* that are *past*, *pleasant*, and *mournful*," from "the *painful* remembrance," Young's "wretched rover o'er the *pleasing past*." "The *ghosts* of *departed joys*," are also converted into "the *ghosts* of *departed bards* ;" and "busy thought, led *softly* by the *stillness* of the *night*," into "*soft* sounds spread along the woods. The *silent* valleys of *night* rejoice."

But Young's efforts to conceal the imitation are truly curious. "The new made widow, *slow moving*, or *prone* on the lowly *grave* of her dear man she *drops*, tenacious of the theme of their *softer hours*," is transformed into the "*widowed* thought of joy, in every varied *posture*, *place*, and *hour*, led *softly* : " "The *busy meddling memory*, in *barbarous* succession, musters up the *past endearments*," is converted into, "*busy thought*, too *busy*, through the postern of *time elapsed*, strays, like a *murderer*, o'er the *pleasing past* ;" and, "the *painful remembrance* of *joys departed*," into "the *ghosts* of my *departed joys*, a numerous train." Turgid writers are seldom original ; but the imagery and scenery in Ossian are as far superior to Young's bombast, as they are inferior to the moral pathos and simplicity of Blair.

⁷ So, when he sits in the silence of noon, in the valley of his breeze, the humming of the mountain bee comes to Ossian's ear.] First edit. THOMSON'S *Summer*.

Nor undelightful is the ceaseless hum,
To him who muses in the woods at noon,
Or drowsy shepherd as he lies reclined.

"The gale drowns it in its course : but the *pleasant sound* returns again." Par. Reg. iv. 15.

*sun on the field; gradual grows the shade of the hill*⁸!

“Raise,” said Cuthullin to his hundred bards,
 “the song of the noble Fingal: that song which
 he hears at night, when the dreams of his rest
 descend; when the bards strike the distant harp,
 and the faint light gleams on Selma’s walls. Or
 let the grief of Lara rise; the sighs of the mo-
 ther of Calmar, when he was sought, in vain, on
 his hills; when she beheld his bow in the hall.
 Carril, place the shield of Caithbat on that
 branch. Let the spear of Cuthullin be near;
 that the sound of my battle may rise, with the

Or as a swarm of flies in vintage time,

About the wine-press, where sweet must is poured,

Beat off, *return as oft with humming sound.*

But the original of this beautiful simile, which suggested these subordinate imitations to Macpherson, is in THEOCRITUS. *Fingal* ii. 23. Vide *Darthula* 14.

‘Α ΒΟΜΒΕΥΣΑ ΜΕΛΙΣΣΑ, καὶ εἰς τοῦ ὄντος ΙΚΟΙΜΕΝ.

“The humming of the mountain bee comes to Ossian’s ear.”

⁸ Slant looks *the sun on the fields; gradual grows the shade of the hill.*] “The silence of noon,” in the preceding passage, was altered in the improved edition, to the silence of the *day*, to introduce this additional imitation of THOMSON’S *Summer*.

Aslant the dew-bright earth, and coloured air,

He *looks*, in boundless majesty, abroad,

And sheds the shining *day*.

grey beam of the east." The hero leaned on his father's shield: the song of Lara rose ! The hundred bards were distant far : Carril alone is near the chief. The words of the song were his : the sound of his harp was mournful.

"Alcletha with the aged locks ! mother of car-borne Calmar ! why dost thou look toward the desert, to behold the return of thy son ! These are not his heroes, dark on the heath : nor is that the voice of Calmar. It is but the distant grove, Alcletha ! but the roar of the mountain wind !" "Who bounds over Lara's stream, sister of the noble Calmar ? Does not Alcletha behold his spear ? But her eyes are dim ! Is it not the son of Matha, daughter of my love ?"

"It is but an aged oak, Alcletha !" replied the lovely weeping Alona. "It is but an oak, Alcletha, bent over Lara's stream. But who comes along the plain ? sorrow is in his speed. He lifts high the spear of Calmar. Alcletha, it is covered with blood !" "But it is covered with the blood of foes, sister of car-borne Calmar ! His spear never returned unstained with blood :

nor his bow from the strife of the mighty ⁹. The battle is consumed in his presence : he is a flame of death, Alona ! Youth of the mournful speed ! where is the son of Alcletha ? Does he return with his fame, in the midst of his echoing shields ? Thou art dark and silent ! Calmar is then no more. Tell me not, warrior, how he fell. I must not hear of his wound !” Why dost thou look towards the desert, mother of low-laid Calmar ?

Such was the song of Carril, when Cuthullin lay on his shield. The bards rested on their harps. Sleep fell softly around. The son of Semo was awake alone. His soul was fixed on war. The burning oaks began to decay. Faint red light is spread around. A feeble voice is heard ! The ghost of Calmar came ! He stalked dimly along the beam. Dark is the wound in his side. His hair is disordered and loose. Joy sits pale on his face ¹⁰. He seems to invite Cuthullin to his cave.

⁹ *His spear never returned unstained with blood ; nor his bow from the strife of the mighty.*] “ From the *blood* of the slain, from the *fat* of the *mighty*, the *bow* of Jonathan turned not back, and the *sword* of Saul returned not empty.” 2 Sam. i. 22. Quoted by Macpherson.

¹⁰ *Dark is the wound in his side. His hair is disordered and*

"Son of the cloudy night !" said the rising chief of Erin, "Why dost thou bend thy dark eyes on me, ghost of the noble Calmar? Wouldest thou frighten me, O Matha's son ! from the battles of Cormac ? Thy hand was not feeble in war ; neither was thy voice for peace. How art thou changed, chief of Lara ! if thou now dost advise to fly ! But, Calmar, I never fled. I never feared the ghosts of night. Small is their knowledge, weak their hands ; their dwelling is in the wind. But my soul grows in danger, and rejoices in the noise of steel. Retire thou to thy cave. Thou art not Calmar's ghost. He delighted in battle. His arm was like the thunder of heaven !" He retired in his blast with joy ; for he had heard the voice of his praise "

loose. *Joy sits pale on his face.*] From Macpherson's Verses on an Officer killed at Quebec.

Why do I see that *bleeding bosom* gored ?

Why bathed in blood the visionary sword ?

What rudeness *ruffled* that *disordered hair* ?

Why, blameless shade ! that *mournful aspect* wear ?

But "he stalked *dimly* along the *beam*.---He seems to *invite* Cuthullin to his *cave*," is from POPE's *Elegy*.

What beck'ning ghost, along the moonlight shade,
Invites my steps, and points to yonder *glade* ?——

Why *dimly gleams* the visionary sword ?

" He retired to his blast with joy ; for he had heard the voice

The faint beam of the morning rose. The sound of Caithbat's buckler spread. Green Erin's warriors convened, like the roar of many streams. The horn of war is heard over Lego. The mighty Torlath came. "Why dost thou come with thy thousands, Cuthullin," said the chief of Lego. "I know the strength of thy arm. Thy soul is an unextinguished fire. Why fight we not on the plain, and let our hosts behold our deeds ¹²? Let them behold us like roaring waves, that tumble round a rock: the mariners hasten away, and look on their strife with fear ¹³."

of his praise.] This is precisely the ghost of Achilles in Homer, who, as soon as he had heard his son Neoptolemus praised for his gallant behaviour, strode away, in silent joy, to rejoin the rest of the shades. BLAIR. *Odyssey*, xi. 537.

¹² *Why fight we not on the plain*, and let our host behold our deeds.] And Cuthullin's answer in the next paragraph, "*Retire, ye men of Ullin, to Slimora's shaggy side:*" From *Cherry Chace*.

Let thou and I the battle try,
And set those men aside.
Accursed be he, Lord Percy said,
By whom this is denied.

¹³ *Like roaring waves that tumble round a distant rock: the mariners hasten away, and look on their strife with fear.*] First edit. DRYDEN'S *Virgil*, *Æn.* iii. 729.

Far off we hear the waves, with surly sound,
Invade the rocks; the rocks their groans rebound——

“Thou risest, like the sun, on my soul,” replied the son of Semo. “Thine arm is mighty, O Torlath ! and worthy of my wrath. Retire, ye men of Ullin, to Slimora’s shady side. Behold the chief of Erin, in the day of his fame. Carril ! tell to mighty Connal, if Cuthullin must fall ; tell him I accused the winds, which roar on Togorma’s waves. Never was he absent in battle, when the strife of my fame arose. Let his sword be before Cormac, like the beam of heaven. Let his counsel sound in Temora, in the day of danger !”

He rushed, in the sound of his arms, like the terrible spirit of Lora ¹⁴ ; when he comes, in the

’Tis that Charybdis which the seer foretold,
And these the promised rocks bear off to sea ;
With *haste* the *frighted mariners* obey.

¹⁴ Loda, in the third book of Fingal, is mentioned as a place of worship in Scandinavia ; by the *spirit of Loda*, the poet probably means Odin, the great deity of the northern nations. He is described here with all his terrors about him, not unlike Mars as he is introduced in a simile in the seventh Iliad. MACPHERSON, 1st edit.

“He *rushed*, in the sound of his *arms*, like the *terrible spirit* of Loda, when he *comes* in the roar of a thousand *storms*, and scatters *battles* from his eyes.---So terrible was Cuthullin in the day of his fame.” *Iliad*, vii. 207.

Αὐτὰρ ἐπειδὴ πάντα περὶ χροῖ ἔσσατο ΤΕΤΥΧΗ,

roar of a thousand storms, and scatters battles
 from his eyes. He sits on a cloud over Lochlin's
 seas. His mighty hand is on his sword. Winds
 lift his flaming locks ! *The waining moon half-*
lights his dreadful face. His features, blended
in darkness, arise to view. So terrible was Cu-
 thullin in the day of his fame. Torlath fell by
 his hand. Lego's heroes mourned. They gather
 around the chief, like the clouds of the desert.
 A thousand swords rose at once ; a thousand ar-

ΣΕΥΑΤ' ἔπειθ', ὥστε ΠΕΛΩΡΙΟΣ ΕΡΧΕΤΑΙ ἌΡΙΣ,

Ὅς τ' εἶναι πόλεμόνδε μετ' ἀνέρας, οὔστε Κρονίων

Θυμοβόρος ἔριδος μένει ξυνέηκε μάχεσθαι·

ΤΟΙΟΣ ἄρ' Αἴας ὦπτο ΠΕΛΩΡΙΟΣ, ἔρκος Ἀχαιῶν.

"His arms reflecting dreadful light : Roused, he *rushed* large
 along : Like *huge Mars*, when he *moves* in *wrath* : When he
rushes to the battle of heroes.---Such Ajax moved large along."
 MACPHERSON'S *Homer*, i. 204.

Ajax rushing to single combat with Hector, like Mars when
 he *moves* in *wrath*, when he *rushes* to the *battle* of heroes ; and
 Cuthullin *rushing* to single combat with Torlath, like the *ter-*
rible spirit of Loda, (οἷος τε πελωρίος Ἀγης, in all his *terrible* glory.
 POPE'S note) ; when he *comes* in the roar of a thousand storms,
 and scatters *battles* from his eyes : are so far from being *not un-*
like, that they are absolutely identical. Of the remaining ima-
 gery, "He sits in a cloud over Lochlin's seas," &c. is a repe-
 titition from *Fingal*, i. 54. ; and, "The waining moon half lights
 his dreadful face," &c. is an addition from Crugal's ghost. *Fin-*
gal, ii, 3. ; not inserted in the first editions.

rows flew ; but he stood like a rock in the midst of a roaring sea. They fell around. He strode in blood. Dark Slimora echoed wide. The sons of Ullin came. The battle spread over Lego. The chief of Erin overcame. He returned over the field with his fame. But pale he returned ! The joy of his face was dark. He rolled his eyes in silence. The sword hung, unsheathed, in his hand. His spear bent at every step !

“Carril,” said the chief in secret, “the strength of Cuthullin fails. My days are with the years that are past¹⁵. No morning of mine shall arise. They shall seek me at Temora ; but I shall not be found¹⁶. Cormac will weep in his hall, and say, “Where is Erin’s chief ?” But my name is renowned ! my fame in the song of bards. The youth will say in secret, “O let me die as Cuthullin died. Renown clothed him like a robe.

¹⁵ *My days are with the years that are past.*] *Night Thoughts*, Night i.

It is the knell of my departed hours ;

Where are they ? *with the years beyond the flood.*

¹⁶ *No morning of mine shall arise. They shall seek me at Temora ; but I shall not be found.*] “For now shall I sleep in the dust ; and thou shalt seek me in the morning ; but I shall not be.” Job, vii. 21.

The light of his fame is great ¹⁷." Draw the arrow from my side. Lay Cuthullin beneath that oak. Place the shield of Caithbat near, that they may behold me amidst the arms of my fathers !"

"And is the son of Semo fallen ?" said Car-
ril, with a sigh. "Mournful are Tura's walls.
Sorrow dwells at Dunscaï. Thy spouse is left
alone in her youth. The son of thy love is alone!
He shall come to Bragela, and ask her why she
weeps. He shall lift his eyes to the wall, and
see his father's sword. "Whose sword is that ?"
he will say. The soul of his mother is sad ¹⁸.
Who is that, like the hart of the desert, in the
murmur of his course ? His eyes look wildly
round in search of his friend. Connal, son of

¹⁷ *Renown clothed him like a robe. The light of his fame is great.*] Fingal, ii. ³⁸. "*Clothed with righteousness ; with the garments of salvation,*" &c. *Scriptures*.

¹⁸ *The soul of his mother is sad.*] The whole passage is a fine alteration of Andromache's lamentation for Hector, whose orphan son she imagines spurned from the feast. POPE'S *Iliad*, xxii. 642.

Thus wretched, thus retiring all in tears,
To my *sad soul* Astyanax appears !
Forced, by repeated insults, to return,
And to his widowed *mother* vainly mourn.

Cólgar, where hast thou been, when the mighty fell? Did the seas of Cogorma roll around thee? Was the wind of the south in thy sails? The mighty have fallen in battle, and thou wast not there. Let none tell it in Selma, nor in Morven's woody land. Fingal will be sad, and the sons of the desert mourn!"¹⁹

By the dark rolling waves of Lego they raised the hero's tomb. Luäth, at a distance, lies. The song of bards rose over the dead.

"Blest be thy soul, son of Semo. Thou wert mighty in battle. Thy strength was like the strength of a stream: thy speed like the eagle's wing²⁰. Thy path in battle was terrible: the steps of death were behind thy sword. Blest be thy soul, son of Semo, car-borne chief of Dunscäi. Thou hast not fallen by the sword of

¹⁹ *The mighty have fallen in battle---Let none tell it in Selma, or in Morven's woody land. Fingal will be sad, and the sons of the desert mourn.*] "How are the mighty fallen! Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph." 2 Sam. i. 19.

²⁰ *Thy strength was like the strength of a stream: thy speed like the eagle's wing.*] "They were swifter than eagles; they were stronger than lions." Id. 23. Quoted by Macpherson. "The steps of death were behind thy sword." *Supra*, 4.

the mighty, neither was thy blood on the spear of the brave. The arrow came, like the sting of death in a blast : nor did the feeble hand, which drew the bow, perceive it ²¹. Peace to thy soul, in thy cave, chief of the isle of mist !”

“The mighty are dispersed at Temora : there is none in Cormac’s hall. The king mourns in his youth. He does not behold thy return. The sound of thy shield is ceased : his foes are gathering round. Soft be thy rest in thy cave, chief of Erin’s wars ! Bragela will not hope for thy return, or see thy sails in ocean’s foam. Her steps are not on the shore ; nor her ear open to the voice of thy rowers. She sits in the hall of shells. She sees the arms of him that is no more. Thine eyes are full of tears, daughter of car-borne Sorglan ! Blest be thy soul in death, O chief of shady Tura !”

²¹ *The arrow came, like the sting of death in a blast : nor did the feeble hand, which drew the bow, perceive it.*] *Æneid*, xii. 319.

Ecce vero stridens alis allapsa sagitta est

Incertum qua pulsa manu, quo turbine adacta.

“And a certain man drew a bow at a venture.” 1 *Kings*, xxii. 34. But “the sting of death in a blast ;” *quo turbine adacta* ; (O death, where is thy sting ?---The sting of death is sin. 1 *Cor.* xv. 55.) is truly Virgilius Evangelisans.

DAR-THULA:

A POEM.

ARGUMENT.

It may not be improper here to give the story which is the foundation of this poem, as it is handed down by tradition. Usnoth, lord of Etha, which is probably that part of Argyle-shire which is near Loch Eta, an arm of the sea in Lorn, had three sons, Nathos, Althos, and Ardan, by Slissama, the daughter of Semo, and sister to the celebrated Cuthullin. The three brothers, when very young, were sent over to Ireland, by their father, to learn the use of arms, under their uncle, Cuthullin, who made a great figure in that kingdom. They were just landed in Ulster when the news of Cuthullin's death arrived. Nathos, though very young, took the command of Cuthullin's army, made head against Cairbar the usurper, and defeated him in several battles. Cairbar at last having found means to murder Cormac the lawful king, the army of Nathos shifted sides, and he himself was obliged to return into Ulster, in order to pass over into Scotland.

Dar-thula, the daughter of Colla, with whom Cairbar was in love, resided, at that time, in Selama, a castle in Ulster: she saw, fell in love, and fled with Nathos; but a storm rising at sea, they were unfortunately driven back on that part of the coast of Ulster, where Cairbar was encamped with his army. The three brothers, after having defended

themselves, for some time, with great bravery, were overpowered and slain, and the unfortunate Dar-thula killed herself upon the body of her beloved Nathos.

The poem opens, on the night preceding the death of the sons of Usnoth, and brings in, by way of episode, what passed before. It relates the death of Dar-thula differently from the common tradition; this account is the most probable, as suicide seems to have been unknown in those early times: for no traces of it are found in the old poetry. MAC-PHERSON.

The name and subject of Dar-thula are taken from the Irish ballad of Deirdre, whom Connor, king of Ulster, had shut up from her birth, in a strong fortress, upon account of a prediction, that her beauty was destined to prove fatal to Ireland. At length, perceiving from her window a raven feeding on the blood of a calf, with which the snow was tinged, she wished for a lover with hair as black as the raven's wing, with cheeks as red as the blood of the calf, and a skin as white as the driven snow. All these qualities her nurse immediately procured in Naois, one of Visneach's sons, who, with the assistance of his two brothers, Ainle and Ard-an, forced the castle in which Deirdre was confined, and carried her to Scotland. The king falling in love with her there, they returned to Ulster; but the three brothers were assassinated on their landing by Connor's orders; and Deirdre, according to the ballad, stabbed herself with a carpenter's knife, which she purchased on the shore; according to the historical legend, she sprung from a carriage and dashed out her brains. The three sons of Visneach were Irishmen, and the nephews of Cuchullin, who was alive at their death; and the Irish ballad of Deirdre is evidently quoted as the common tradition concerning the death of Dar-thula, so very different it seems from the poem which tradition has preserved.

DAR-THULA:

A POEM.

DAUGHTER of heaven¹, fair art thou! the silence of thy face is pleasant! Thou comest forth in loveliness. The stars attend thy blue course in the east. The clouds rejoice in thy presence, O moon: They brighten with dark-brown sides². Who is like thee in heaven, light

¹ *Daughter of heaven, fair art thou! the silence of thy face is pleasant.*] “Behold thou art fair my beloved, yea pleasant.” Song of Solomon, i. 16.

² *The silence of thy face is pleasant! Thou comest forth in loveliness. The stars attend thy blue course in the east. The clouds rejoice in thy presence, O moon: They brighten their dark-brown sides.*] Par. Lost, iv. 601.

of the silent night? The stars are ashamed in thy presence³. They turn away their sparkling eyes. Whither dost thou retire from thy course, when the darkness of thy countenance grows? Hast thou thy hall, like Ossian⁴? Dwellest thou

*Silence was pleased ; now glowed the firmament
With living sapphires : Hesperus that led
The starry host rode brightest, till the moon,
Rising in clouded majesty, at length
Apparent queen, unveiled her peerless light.*

Or, “*Who is like thee in heaven, light of the silent night.*”
“*Thou comest forth in thy loveliness. The stars attend thy blue steps in the east ;*” are repetitions of a former imitation of Milton and Thomson. “*She came in all her beauty, like the moon from the cloud of the east. Loveliness was around her as light ; her steps were the music of songs.*” *Fingal*, iii. 6.
“*The clouds rejoice in thy presence—They brighten their dark brown sides,*” is from POPE’S *Iliad*, viii. 697.

The conscious swains, *rejoicing* at the sight,
Eye the *blue* vault, and bless the useful light :

And MACPHERSON’S *Highlander*, vi. 21.

Thus on expanded plains of heavenly blue,
Thick gathered clouds the *queen of night* pursue ;
And as they croud behind their sable lines,
The virgin light with double lustre shines.

³ *The stars are ashamed in thy presence.*] “The moon shall be confounded and the sun *ashamed.*” Isaiah, xxiv. 23.

⁴ *Whither dost thou retire from thy course, when the darkness of thy countenance grows? Hast thou thy hall like Ossian?*] *Samson Agonistes*, 86.

The sun to me is *dark*,
And silent as the moon,

in the shadow of grief⁵? Have thy sisters fallen from heaven⁶? Are they who rejoiced with thee, at night, no more? Yes, they have fallen, fair light! and thou dost often retire to mourn. But thou thyself shalt fail, one night⁷; and

When she *deserts* the *night*,
Hid in her vacant *interlunar* *cave*.

Her hall like Ossian, to which she *retires* from her *course* when she *deserts* the *night*, hid in her vacant interlunar cave.

⁵ Dwellest thou in the shadow of grief.] “They that dwell in the vale of the shadow of death.” Isaiah, ix. 2.

⁶ Have thy sisters fallen from heaven?] “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning?” Isaiah, xiv. 12. converted into the sisters of the moon; “they who rejoiced with thee at night,” from Milton’s translation of the 136th Psalm.

The horned moon to *shine* by *night*
 With all her spangled *sisters* bright.

vide *Carric-Thura*, 1. But the moon in her wane returning to her hall, or interlunar cave, to mourn the loss of her sister planets, our former satellites, is a modern conceit, upon which Blair’s speculations are most amusing and absurd.

⁷ But thou thyself shalt fail one night.] It is observable, that the address to the moon in Dar-thula, is little else than the counterpart of the address to the sun in Carthon. The sun comes forth in his awful beauty; and the moon comes forth in loveliness: The stars hide themselves on his appearance; and the stars turn away their green sparkling eyes in her presence. (First edit.) Who is like her in heaven? and who can be the companion of his course? The moon herself is lost in heaven; but he rejoices in the brightness of his course: and when the

leave thy blue path in heaven. The stars will then lift their heads: they, who were ashamed in thy presence, will rejoice. Thou art now clothed with thy brightness. Look from thy gates in the sky. Burst the cloud, O wind, that the daughter of night may look forth! that the shaggy mountains may brighten, and the ocean roll its white waves, in light ⁸.

Nathos is on the deep, and Althos, that beam of youth. Ardan is near his brothers. They move in the gloom of their course. The sons of Usnoth move in darkness, from the wrath of

darkness of her countenance grows, she retires from her course. But his years will have an end; the sun of heaven shall fail; and the daughter of heaven shall fail one night: from the same passage in the *Rape of the Lock*. Such are the eternal repetitions in Ossian; but the praise of Sulpitia cannot always be applied to the Celtic muse.

Talis in æterno felix Vertumnus Olympo

Mille habet ornatus, mille *decenter* habet.

⁸ Burst the cloud, O wind!—that the shaggy mountains may brighten, and the ocean roll its white wave in light.] *Lora*, 9. *Iliad*, viii. 553.

Ἐκ τ' ἔφανον πᾶσαι ΣΚΟΠΙΑΙ, καὶ πρόωγες ΑΚΡΑΙ,
καὶ νάπαι· οὐρανόθεν δ' ἄρ' ὑπερραγὴ ἄσπετος αἰθῆρ,

O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure shed,
And tip with *silver* every mountain's head;
Then shine the vales, the rocks in prospect rise,
A flood of glory *bursts* from all the *skies*.

POPE.

Cairbar of Erin. Who is that dim, by their side? the night has covered her beauty! Her hair sighs on ocean's wind. Her robe streams in dusky wreaths. She is, like the fair spirit of heaven, in the midst of his shadowy mist⁹. Who is it but Dar-thula, the first of Erin's maids? She has fled from the love of Cairbar with blue-shielded Nathos. But the winds deceive thee, O Dar-thula. They deny the woody Etha, to thy sails. These are not the mountains of Nathos¹⁰; nor is that the roar of his climbing waves. The halls of Cairbar are near: the towers of the foe lift their heads! Erin stretches its green head into the sea. Tura's bay receives the ship. Where have ye been, ye southern winds! when the sons of my love were de-

⁹ *Like the fair spirit of heaven in the midst of her shadowy mist.*] Moina's ghost, like the new moon seen through the gathered mist, is here employed as a simile for Dar-thula. *Carthon*, 17.

¹⁰ *But the winds deceive thee, O Dar-thula. They deny the woody Etha to thy sails. These are not the mountains of Nathos.*] An imitation of Milton's apostrophe to Eve. *Par. Lost*, ix. 405.

O much deceived, much failing, hapless Eve,
Of thy presumed return event perverse!
Thou never from that hour in Paradise
Found'st either sweet repast or sound repose.

ceived? But ye have been sporting on plains, pursuing the thistle's beard. O that ye had been rustling, in the sails of Nathos¹¹, till the

¹¹ Where have ye been, ye southern winds, when the sons of my love were deceived? But ye have been sporting on plains, pursuing the thistle's beard. O that ye had been rustling in the sails of Nathos.] MILTON's *Lycidas*.

*Where were ye, nymphs, when the remorseless deep
Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?
For neither were you playing on the steep,
Where your old bards, the famous druids, lie,
Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high,
Nor yet where Deva spreads her wizard stream;
Ay me! I fondly dream!*

Had ye been there, for what could that have done?

The resemblance is such, that even Milton's phraseology is preserved in Ossian. *Where were ye, nymphs?* and, *Where have ye been, ye southern winds?* *When* the deep closed o'er the head of *your loved Lycidas*; *When* the sons of *my love* (whose love?) were deceived. For neither were you *playing on the steep*, where your *old bards*: But ye have been *sporting on plains*, pursuing the thistle's beard. *Ay me! had ye been there*; *O that ye had been rustling in the sails of Nathos*.

Blair observes that the *apostrophe* to the winds is remarkable for the *resemblance* it bears to an *expostulation* with the wood nymphs on their absence at a particular time, which, as a favourite poetical idea, Virgil has copied from Theocritus, and Milton has very happily imitated both. If unable, however, to discern in Ossian a common-place imitation of Milton, Blair might at least have suspected that the same *apostrophe* which Virgil and Milton have copied from Theocritus, and

hills of Etha arose ! till they arose in their clouds, and saw their returning chief ! Long hast thou been absent, Nathos ! The day of thy return is past !

But the land of strangers saw thee, lovely : thou wast lovely in the eyes of Dar-thula. Thy face was like the light of the morning¹². Thy hair like the raven's wing. Thy soul was generous and mild, like the hour of the setting sun. Thy words were the gale of the reeds ; the gliding stream of Lora ! But when the rage of battle rose, thou wast a sea in a storm. The clang of thy arms was terrible : the host vanished at the sound of thy course. It was then Dar-thula beheld thee, from the top of her mossy tower : from the tower of Selama, where her fathers dwelt.

“ Lovely art thou, O stranger ! ” she said, for her trembling soul arose. “ Fair art thou in thy battles, friend of the fallen Cormac ! Why dost thou rush on, in thy valour, youth of the

Pope from Virgil, could not have occurred to Ossian without imitation.

¹² *Thy face was like the light of the morning.*] “ And he shall be as the *light* of the *morning*.” 2 Samuel, xxiii. 4.

ruddy look ? Few are thy hands, in fight, against the dark-browed Cairbar ! O that I might be freed from his love ! that I might rejoice in the presence of Nathos ! Blest are the rocks of Etha ! they will behold his steps at the chace ! they will see his white bosom, when the winds lift his flowing hair !" Such were thy words, Dar-thula, in Selama's mossy towers. But, now, the night is around thee. The winds have deceived thy sails. The winds have deceived thy sails, Dar-thula ! Their blustering sound is high. Cease a little while, O north wind. Let me hear the voice of the lovely¹³. Thy voice

¹³ Cease a little while, O north wind. *Let me hear the voice of the lovely.*] "*Awake, O north wind, and come thou south, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden and eat the pleasant fruits.*" *Song of Solomon*, iv. 16.

By dividing Solomon's address to the winds, Macpherson, in his imitation of Milton's apostrophe, transformed the wood nymphs, not unhappily, into the southern winds ; and now he desires the north wind to cease a little, that by the absurd intermixture of the past and the present, of epic, lyric, and dramatic poetry, Ossian might listen to his own song in Dar-thula's mouth. What opinion would posterity have entertained of the genius or judgment of Homer, if in the *Iliad* he had intreated Hector to shew him his wounds ; or in the *Odyssey* had requested Calypso, Circé, or Penelope, to *let him hear the voice of the lovely*, as they sat at their looms !

is lovely, O Dar-thula, between the rustling blasts¹⁴.

“Are these the rocks of Nathos?” she said, “This the roar of his mountain-streams? Comes that beam of light from Usnoth’s nightly hall? The mist spreads around; the beam is feeble and distant far. But the light of Dar-thula’s soul dwells in the chief of Etha! Son of the generous Usnoth, why that broken sigh? Are we in the land of strangers, chief of echoing Etha!”

“These are not the rocks of Nathos,” he replied, “not this the roar of his streams. No light comes from Etha’s halls, for they are distant far. We are in the land of strangers, in the land of cruel Cairbar. The winds have deceived us, Dar-thula. Erin lifts here her hills.

¹⁴ *Thy voice is lovely, Darthula, between the rustling blasts.*]
MACPHERSON’S *Hunter*.

While a soft *voice* invades my trembling ear——

’*Twixt every blast is heard the pleasing sound,*

Then in the howling *hurricane is drowned.*

So “the humming of the mountain-bee comes to Ossian’s ear. The gale drowns it in its course. But the pleasant sound returns again.” *Death of Cuthullin*, 7. In these instances the phraseology is the same; and if the pretended originals were published, we should discover the same phraseology in Earso.

Go towards the north, Althos ; be thy steps, Ardan, along the coast ; that the foe may not come in darkness, and our hopes of Etha fail."

"I will go towards that mossy tower, to see who dwells about the beam. Rest, Dar-thula, on the shore ! rest in peace, thou lovely light ! the sword of Nathos is around thee, like the lightning of heaven !"

He went. She sat alone ; she heard the rolling of the wave. The big tear is in her eye. She looks for returning Nathos. Her soul trembles at the blast. She turns her ear towards the tread of his feet. The tread of his feet is not heard. "Where art thou, son of my love ! The roar of the blast is around me. Dark is the cloudy night. But Nathos does not return. What detains thee, chief of Etha ? Have the foes met the hero in the strife of the night ?"

He returned, but his face was dark. He had seen his departed friend ! It was the wall of Tura. The ghost of Cuthullin stalked there alone : the sighing of his breast was frequent. The decayed flame of his eyes was terrible ! His spear was a column of mist. The stars looked dim through his form. His voice was like hollow

wind in a cave¹⁵: *his eye a light seen afar*¹⁶.
He told the tale of grief. The soul of Nathos
was sad, like the sun in the day of mist, when
his face is watry and dim¹⁷.

“Why art thou sad, O Nathos?” said the
lovely daughter of Colla. “Thou art a pillar of
light to Dar-thula. The joy of her eyes is in
Etha’s chief. Where is my friend, but Nathos?
My father, my brother is fallen¹⁸! Silence dwells

¹⁵ *His voice was like hollow wind in a cave.*] Caros,⁵. Par.
Lost, ii. 285.

As when hollow rocks retain

The sound of blustering winds.

¹⁶ *His eye a light seen afar.*] From POPE’S *Iliad*, xix. 404.
Not inserted in the 1st editions.

So to night wandering sailors, pale with fears,
Wide o’er the watry waste a *light* appears,
Which, on the *far-seen* mountain blazing high,
Streams from some lonely watch tower to the sky.

¹⁷ *Like the sun in the day of mist, when his face is watry and dim.*] DRYDEN’S *Virgil*, Georg. i. 489. Quoted by Macpherson.

For if he rise unwilling to the race,
Clouds in his brows, and spots upon his face;
Or if through mists he shoots his sullen beams,
Frugal of light, in loose and straggling streams;
Suspect a *drizzling day*, with southern rain.

“Or, a day of mist, when his face is watry and dim.” *Vid. infra*,²⁰.

¹⁸ *Where is my friend, but Nathos? My father, my brother*

on Selama. Sadness spreads on the blue streams of my land. My friends have fallen with Cormac. The mighty were slain in the battles of Erin. Hear, son of Usnoth ! hear, O Nathos, my tale of grief.

“Evening darkened on the plain. The blue streams failed before mine eyes. The unfrequent blast came rustling, in the tops of Selama’s groves. My seat was beneath a tree, on the walls of my fathers. Truthal past before my soul : the brother of my love : he that was absent in battle, against the haughty Cairbar ! Bending on his spear, the grey-haired Colla came. His downcast face is dark, and sorrow dwells in his soul. His sword is on the side of the hero : the helmet of his fathers on his head. The battle grows in his breast. He strives to hide the tear.

is fallen !] From Andromache’s speech to Hector, *Iliad*, vi.

411. Quoted by Macpherson.

Οὐ γὰρ ἔτ’ ἄλλη

Ἔσται ΘΑΛΠΩΡΗ ἐπεὶ ἂν σύ γε πότμον ἐπίσπῃς,

Ἄλλ’ ἄχρ’ οὐδέ μοι ἐστὶ ΠΑΤΗΡ καὶ πότνια ΜΗΤΗΡ.

No parent now remains my grief to share,
No *father’s* aid, no *mother’s* tender care.

POPE.

“Dar-thula, my daughter,” he said, “thou art the last of Colla’s race! Truthil is fallen in battle. The chief of Selama is no more! Cairbar comes, with his thousands, towards Selama’s walls. Colla will meet his pride, and revenge his son. But where shall I find thy safety, Dar-thula, with the dark-brown hair! thou art lovely as the sun-beam of heaven, and thy friends are low!” “Is the son of battle fallen?” I said, with a sigh. “Ceased the generous soul of Truthil to lighten through the field? My safety, Colla, is in that bow. I have learned to pierce the deer. Is not Cairbar like the hart of the desert, father of fallen Truthil?”

“The face of age brightened with joy. The crowded tears of his eyes poured down. The lips of Colla trembled. His grey beard whistled in the blast. “Thou art the sister of Truthil,” he said; “thou burnest in the fire of his soul. Take, Dar-thula, take that spear, that brazen shield, that burnished helm: they are the spoils of a warrior, a son of early youth! When the light rises on Selama, we go to meet the car-borne Cairbar. But keep thou near the arm of Colla, beneath the shadow of my shield. Thy

father, Dar-thula, could once defend thee ; but age is trembling on his hand. The strength of his arm has failed. His soul is darkened with grief."

We passed the night in sorrow. The light of morning rose. I shone in the arms of battle. The grey-haired hero moved before. The sons of Selama convened, around the sounding shield of Colla. But few were they in the plain, and their locks were grey. The youths had fallen with Truthil, in the battle of car-borne Cormac. "Friends of my youth!" said Colla, "it was not thus you have seen me in arms. It was not thus I strode to battle, when the great Confadan fell. But ye are laden with grief. The darkness of age comes like the mist of the desert. My shield is worn with years ! my sword is fixed in its place ! I said to my soul, thy evening shall be calm : Thy departure like a fading light. But the storm has returned. I bend like an aged oak. My boughs are fallen on Selama. I tremble in my place. Where art thou, with thy fallen heroes, O my beloved Truthil ! Thou answerest not from thy rushing blast. The soul of thy father is sad. But I will be sad no more, Cairbar or

Colla must fall ! I feel the returning strength of my arm. My heart leaps at the sound of war."

The hero drew his sword. The gleaming blades of his people rose. They moved along the plain. Their grey hair streamed in the wind. Cairbar sat at the feast, in the silent plain of Lona. He saw the coming of the heroes. He called his chiefs to war. Why should I tell to Nathos how the strife of battle grew ? I have seen thee, in the midst of thousands, like the beam of heaven's fire : it is beautiful, but terrible ; the people fall in its dreadful course¹⁹. The spear of Colla flew. He remembered the battles of his youth. An arrow came with its sound. It pierced the hero's side. He fell on his echoing shield. My soul started with fear. I stretched my buckler over him : but my breast was seen ! Cairbar came, with his spear. He beheld Selama's maid. Joy rose on his dark-brown face. He stayed the lifted steel. He raised the tomb of Colla. He brought me weeping to Selama. He spoke the words of love ; but my soul was sad. I saw the shields of my fathers ; the sword of

¹⁹ *Like the beam of heaven's fire.---The people fall in its dreadful course.*] See Fingal, i. 57.

car-borne Truthil. I saw the arms of the dead ; the tear was on my cheek ! Then thou didst come, O Nathos : and gloomy Cairbar fled. He fled like the ghost of the desert before the morning's beam. \ His host was not near : and feeble was his arm against thy steel ! Why art thou sad, O Nathos ! said the lovely daughter of Colla ?

“ I have met,” replied the hero, “ the battle in my youth. My arm could not lift the spear, when danger first arose. My soul brightened in the presence of war, as the green narrow vale, when the sun pours his streamy beams, before he hides his face in a storm²⁰. The lonely traveller feels a mournful joy. He sees the darkness that slowly comes. My soul brightened in danger before I saw Selama's fair ; before I saw thee, like a star, that shines on the hill, at night : the cloud advances, and threatens the lovely

²⁰ *When the sun pours his streamy beams, before he hides his head in a storm.*] The remainder of the former imitation of VIRGIL, *supra*, ¹⁷. *Georg.* i. 442.

Conditus in nubem, medioque refugerit orbe.

Or if through mists he *shoots* his sullen *beams*,

Frugal of light, in loose and straggling *streams*.

light ²¹ ! We are in the land of foes. The winds have deceived us, Dar-thula ! The strength of our friends is not near, nor the mountains of Etha. Where shall I find thy peace, daughter of mighty Colla ! The brothers of Nathos are brave ! and his own sword has shone in fight. But what are the sons of Usnoth to the host of dark-browed Cairbar ! O that the winds had brought thy sails, Oscar, king of men ! Thou

²¹ *Like a star that shines on the hill, at night ; the cloud advances, and threatens the lovely light.*] The original is undoubtedly in HOMER. *Iliad*, xi, 62.

Οἷος δ' ἐκ νεφέων ἀναφαίνεται οὐλῖος ΑΣΤΗΡ.

Παμφαίνων, τότε δ' αὖτις ΕΔΥ ΝΕΦΕΑ ΣΚΙΟΕΝΤΑ·

“As a baleful comet by night, glides red behind the broken clouds : now it bursts forth in full blaze, now hides in darkness its awful head.” MACPHERSON'S *Homer*, ii. 312.

But Apollonius Rhodius, to whom our author, on another occasion, has extended his depredations, compares the beautiful Minyæ, surrounded by crowds, to the appearance of stars shining through clouds. *Argonautics*, i. 239.

Ἀμφὶ δὲ λαῶν

Πληθος ἐπερχομένων ἄμυδις θεεν ; οἱ δὲ, ΦΑΕΙΝΟΝ

ΑΣΤΕΡΕΣ ὡς ΝΕΦΕΕΣΣΙ, μετεπρεπον.

Which the son of Sirach has translated, with other beauties of the Greek poets, into his pretended Wisdom of his Hebrew ancestor. “How was he (Simon, the high priest) honoured in the *midst* of the people, in his coming out of the sanctuary ! He was as the morning star in the *midst* of a cloud, and as the moon at the full.” *Ecclesiasticus*, l. 5.

didst promise to come to the battles of fallen Cormac ! Then would my hand be strong, as the flaming arm of death ²². Cairbar would tremble in his halls, and peace dwell round the lovely Dar-thula. But why dost thou fall, my soul ? The sons of Usnoth may prevail ! ”

“ And they will prevail, O Nathos ! ” said the rising soul of the maid. “ Never shall Dar-thula behold the halls of gloomy Cairbar. Give me those arms of brass, that glitter to the passing meteor. I see them dimly in the dark-bosomed ship. Darthula will enter the battle of steel. Ghost of the noble Colla ! do I behold thee on that cloud ? Who is that dim beside thee ? Is it the car-borne Truthil ? Shall I behold the halls of him that slew Selama’s chief ? No : I will not behold them, spirits of my love ! ”

Joy rose in the face of Nathos, when he heard the white-bosomed maid. “ Daughter of Selama ! thou shinest along my soul. Come, with

²² *Strong as the flaming arm of death.*] From the Chorus in MASON’S *Caractacus*.

’Twas *Death* : in haste,

The warrior past ;——

I saw his *giant arm* the falchion wield ;

Wide waved the bickering blade, and *fired* the angry air.

thy thousands, Cáirbar ; the strength of Nathos is returned ! Thou, O aged Usnoth, shalt not hear that thy son has fled. I remember thy words on Etha ; when my sails began to rise ; when I spread them towards Erin, towards the mossy walls of Tura ! “Thou goest,” he said, “O Nathos, to the king of shields ! Thou goest to Cuthullin, chief of men, who never fled from danger”²³. Let not thine arm be feeble: neither be thy thoughts of flight ; lest the son of Semo should say, that Erin’s race are weak. His words may come to Usnoth, and sadden his soul in the

²³ *I remember thy words in Etha.*---“Thou goest,” he said, “O Nathos, to the king of shields. Thou goest to Cuthullin, chief of men, who never fled from danger.”] A curious imitation.

“I said within myself, *Remember, Paul, thou standest before men of high worship* ; the wise Mr Justice Freeman, the grave Mr Justice Tonson, the good Lady Jones, and the two virtuous gentlewomen her daughters ; nay, the great Sir Thomas Truby, knight and baronet, and my young master, *who* shall one day be lord of this manor.---When I raised the psalms, how did my voice quiver for fear ! And when I arrayed the shoulders of the minister with the surplice, how did my joints tremble under me !” *Viz.* “Let not thine arm be feeble, neither be thy thoughts of flight.” POPE’s *Memoirs of a Parish Clerk*. More extraordinary imitations than this will appear in the sequel.

hall. The tear was on my father's cheek." He gave this shining sword !

" I came to Tura's bay : but the halls of Tura were silent. I looked around, and there was none to tell of the son of generous Semo. I went to the hall of shells, where the arms of his fathers hung. But the arms were gone, and aged Lamhor sat in tears. Whence are the arms of steel, said the rising Lamhor ? The light of the spear has long been absent from Tura's dusky walls. Come ye from the rolling sea ? Or from Temora's mournful halls ?

" We come from the sea," I said, " from Usnoth's rising tower. We are the sons of Slisáma, the daughter of car-borne Semo. Where is Tura's chief, son of the silent hall ? But why should Nathos ask ? for I behold thy tears. How did the mighty fall, son of the lonely Tura ?" " He fell not," Lamhor replied, " like the silent star of night, when it flies through darkness, and is no more. But he was like a meteor that shoots into a distant land. Death attends its dreary course. Itself is the sign of wars ²⁴. Mourn-

²⁴ *Like a meteor that shoots into a distant land. Death attends its dreary course. Itself is the sign of wars.*] *Par. Lost*, ii. 708.

ful are the banks of Lego ; and the roar of streamy Lara ! There the hero fell, son of the noble Usnoth." "The hero fell in the midst of slaughter," I said, with a bursting sigh. "His hand was strong in war. Death dimly sat behind his sword."

We came to Lego's sounding banks. We found his rising tomb. His friends in battle are there : his bards of many songs. Three days we mourned over the hero ; on the fourth I struck the shield of Caithbat. The heroes gathered around with joy, and shook their beamy spears. Corlath was near with his host, the friend of carborne Cairbar. We came like a stream by night. His heroes fell before us. When the people of the valley rose, they saw their blood with morning's light ²⁵. But we rolled away, like wreaths

And like a comet burned,
That fires the length of Ophiuchus huge
In the arctic sky, and from his horrid hair
Shakes pestilence and war.

As an instance of variations, death, or pestilence, in the first edition, attends its *green* course ; in the third edition, its *red* course ; and now, its *dreary* course, into a distant land : the length of Ophiuchus huge, in the arctic sky.

²⁵ *We came like a stream by night.---When the people of the valley rose, they saw their blood with morning's light.*] "And

of mist, to Cormac's echoing hall. Our swords rose to defend the king. But Temora's halls were empty. Cormac had fallen in his youth. The king of Erin was no more !

Sadness seized the sons of Erin. They slowly, gloomily retired ; like clouds that, long having threatened rain, vanish behind the hills. The sons of Usnoth moved, in their grief, towards Tura's sounding bay. We passed by Selama. Cairbar retired like Lano's mist, when driven before the winds. It was then I beheld thee, O Dar-thula, like the light of Etha's sun. " Lovely is that beam !" I said. The crowded sigh of my bosom rose. " Thou camest in thy beauty, Dar-thula, to Erin's mournful chief. But the winds have deceived us, daughter of Colla, and the foe is near ! "

it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians, an hundred and fourscore and five thousand ; and when they rose early in the morning, behold they were all dead corpses." 2 Kings, xix. 35. Quoted by Macpherson. " Then saith the Lord, make this valley full of ditches.---And they rose up early in the morning, and the sun shone upon the water, and the Moabites saw the water on the other side as red as blood ; and they said, this is blood." 2 Kings, iii. 16, 22. " When the people of the valley rose, they saw their blood with morning's light."

“Yes! the foe is near,” said the rushing strength of Althos; “I hear their clanging arms on the coast. I saw the dark wreaths of Erin’s standard. Distinct is the voice of Cairbar. Loud as Cromla’s falling stream. He had seen the dark ship on the sea, before the dusky night came down. His people watch on Lena’s plain. They lift ten thousand swords.” “And let them lift ten thousand swords,” said Nathos, with a smile. “The sons of car-borne Usnoth will never tremble in danger! Why dost thou roll with all thy foam, thou roaring sea of Erin? Why do ye rustle on your dark wings, ye whistling storms of the sky? Do ye think, ye storms, that ye keep Nathos on the coast? No: his soul detains him, children of the night! Althos! bring my father’s arms: thou seest them beaming to the stars. Bring the spear of Semo. It stands in the dark-bosomed ship!”

He brought the arms. Nathos covered his limbs, in all their shining steel. The stride of the chief is lovely. The joy of his eyes was terrible. He looks towards the coming of Cairbar. The wind is rustling in his hair. Dar-thula is silent at his side. Her look is fixed on the chief.

She strives to hide the rising sigh. Two tears
swell in her radiant eyes ! ²⁶

“Althos !” said the chief of Erin, “I see a
cave in that rock. Place Dar-thula there. Let
thy arm, my brother, be strong. Ardan ! we
meet the foe ; call to battle gloomy Cairbar. O
that he came in his sounding steel, to meet the
son of Usnoth ! Dar-thula ! if thou shalt escape,
look not on the fallen Nathos ! Lift thy sails,
O Althos, towards the echoing groves of my
land.”

“Tell the chief, that his son fell with fame ;
that my sword did not shun the fight. Tell him
I fell in the midst of thousands. Let the joy of
his grief be great. Daughter of Colla ! call the
maids to Etha’s echoing hall ! Let their songs
arise for Nathos, when shadowy autumn returns.
O that the voice of Cona, that Ossian, might be
heard in my praise ! then would my spirit re-
joice in the midst of the rushing winds.” “And
my voice shall praise thee, Nathos, chief of the

²⁶ *Two tears swell in her radiant eyes.*] In MACPHERSON’S
Death, a poem, written at the age of seventeen.

Her azure eyes,
Like two fair fountains, watered the plain
Of roses on her cheek.

woody Etha ! The voice of Ossian shall rise in thy praise, son of the generous Usnoth ! Why was I not on Lena, when the battle rose ? Then would the sword of Ossian defend thee ; or himself fall low !”

We sat that night in Selma, round the strength of the shell. The wind was abroad, in the oaks. The spirit of the mountain ²⁷ roared. The blast came rustling through the hall, and gently touch-

²⁷ By the spirit of the mountain, is meant that deep and melancholy sound which precedes a storm ; well known to those who live in a high country. MACPHERSON.

The “ *deep and melancholy sound of the mountain, which precedes a storm*, so well known to those who live in a high country,” is pretty faithfully transcribed from THOMSON’S *Winter*.

Along the woods, along the moorish fens,
Sighs the sad genius of the coming storm ;
And up among the loose disjointed cliffs,
And fractured mountains wild, the brawling brook,
And cave, presageful, send a hollow moan,
Resounding long in listening Fancy’s ear.

By a strange fatality, the very notes afford incontestible proofs of imitation ; but the text itself is from a different source. “ We sat that *night* in Selma.---The *wind* was abroad in the oaks. The *spirit of the mountain shrieked*.” First edit. From HOME’S *Douglas*.

One stormy night, as I remember well,
The wind and rain beat hard upon our roof ;
Red came the river down ; and loud and oft
The angry spirit of the water shrieked.

ed my harp. The sound was mournful and low, like the song of the tomb. Fingal heard it the first. The crowded sighs of his bosom rose. "Some of my heroes are low," said the grey-haired king of Morven. "I hear the sound of death on the harp. Ossian, touch the trembling string. Bid the sorrow rise; that their spirits may fly with joy, to Morven's woody hills!" I touched the harp before the king; the sound was mournful and low. "Bend forward from your clouds," I said, "ghosts of my fathers! bend. Lay by the red terror of your course. Receive the falling chief; whether he comes from a distant land, or rises from the rolling sea. Let his robe of mist be near; his spear that is formed of a cloud. Place an half-extinguished meteor by his side, in the form of the hero's sword. And, oh! let his countenance be lovely, that his friends may delight in his presence. Bend from your clouds," I said, "ghosts of my fathers! bend!"

Such was my song, in Selma, to the lightly-trembling harp. But Nathos was on Erin's shore, surrounded by the night. He heard the voice of the foe, amidst the roar of tumbling waves. Silent he heard their voice, and rested on his

spear ! Morning rose, with its beams. The sons of Erin appear, like grey rocks, with all their trees ; they spread along the coast. Cairbar stood in the midst. He grimly smiled when he saw the foe. Nathos rushed forward in his strength : nor could Dar-thula stay behind. She came with the hero, lifting her shining spear. “ And who are these, in their armour, in the pride of youth ? Who but the sons of Usnoth, Althos and dark-haired Ardan ? ”

“ Come,” said Nathos, “ come ! chief of high Temora ! Let our battle be on the coast, for the white-bosomed maid. His people are not with Nathos ; they are behind these rolling seas. Why dost thou bring thy thousands against the chief of Etha ? Thou didst fly from him in battle, when his friends were around his spear.” “ Youth of the heart of pride, shall Erin’s king fight with thee ? Thy fathers were not among the renowned, nor of the kings of men. Are the arms of foes in their halls ? Or the shields of other times ? Cairbar is renowned in Temora : nor does he fight with feeble men ! ”

The tear started from car-borne Nathos. He turned his eyes to his brothers. Their spears

flew, at once. Three heroes lay on earth. Then the light of their swords gleamed on high. The ranks of Erin yield ; as a ridge of dark clouds before a blast of wind ! Then Cairbar ordered his people, and they drew a thousand bows. A thousand arrows flew. The sons of Usnoth fell in blood. They fell like three young oaks, which stood alone on the hill : The traveller saw the lovely trees, and wondered how they grew so lonely : the blast of the desert came, by night, and laid their green heads low : Next day he returned : but they were withered, and the heath was bare ! ²⁸

²⁸ *They fell like three young oaks, which stood alone on the hill, &c.] Iliad, xvii. 53.*

Οἶον δὲ τρέφει ΕΡΝΟΣ ΑΝΗΡ ἐριθηλὲς ἐλαίης
 ΧΩΡΩ ἐν ΟΙΟΠΟΛΩ, ὅθ' ἄλις ἀναβέβρυχεν ὕδωρ,
 Καλὸν. τηλεθάον, τό δέ τε πνοιαὶ δονέουσι
 Παντοίων ἀνέμων, καὶ τε βρύει ἄνθεϊ λευκῷ·
 ἘΛΘΩΝ δ' ΕΞΑΠΙΝΗΣ ἀνεμος, σὺν λαίλαπι πολλῇ
 Βόθρου τ' ἐξέστρεψε καὶ ἐξετάνυσσ' ἐπὶ γαίῃ·

As the *young olive* in some sylvan scene,
 Crowned by fresh fountains with eternal *green*,
 Lifts the gay *head* in snowy flow'rets fair,
 And plays and dances to the gentle air ;
 When, lo ! a *whirlwind* from high heaven invades
 The tender plant, and *withers* all its shades :

Dar-thula stood in silent grief, and beheld their fall ! No tear is in her eye. But her look is wildly sad. Pale was her cheek. Her trembling lips broke short an half-formed word. Her dark hair flew on wind. The gloomy Cair-bar came. "Where is thy lover now ? the car-borne chief of Etha ? Hast thou beheld the halls of Usnoth ? Or the dark-brown hills of Fingal ?

*It lies uprooted from its genial bed,
A lovely ruin, now defaced and dead.*

POPE.

"To this comparison in the death of Euphorbus, elegant as it is," says Blair, "we may oppose the following simile of Ossian's, relating to the death of the three sons of Usnoth."

"They fell like three *young oaks* which stood *alone* on the hill. The *traveller* saw the *lovely* trees, and wondered how they grew so *lonely*: the blast of the desert came by *night*, and laid their *green heads low*: Next day he returned; but they were *withered*, and the heath was bare."

The "three *young oaks*, which stood *alone* on the hill, where the *traveller* saw, and wondered how they grew so *lonely*," are merely a multiplication of "the *young olive*, which a man *rears* (*χρῆνω ἐν οἴκῳ πολῷ*) in a *lonely field*." (MACPHERSON'S *Homer*, ii. 167.) "And "its *head* crowned with *eternal green*, when a *whirlwind* from high heaven invades, and *withers* the tender plant, which *lies*, a *lovely ruin*, *uprooted* from its *genial bed*," is converted, by the transposition of epithets, into, "the *lovely* trees, when the *blast* of the *desert* comes by *night* (*ἐλθὼν ἐξ ἀπέναντος ἀνεμῶς*), and *lays* their *green heads low*. Next day, they are *withered*, and the *heath* is bare."

My battle would have roared on Morven, had not the winds met Dar-thula. Fingal himself would have been low, and sorrow dwelling in Selma !” Her shield fell from Dar-thula’s arm. Her breast of snow appeared. It appeared ; but it was stained with blood. An arrow was fixed in her side. She fell on the fallen Nathos, like a wreath of snow ! Her hair spreads wide on his face. Their blood is mixing round !

“ Daughter of Colla ! thou art low !” said Cairbar’s hundred bards. “ Silence is at the blue streams of Selama. Truthil’s race have failed. When wilt thou rise in thy beauty, first of Erin’s maids ? Thy sleep is long in the tomb. The morning distant far ²⁹. The sun shall not come to thy bed, and say ³⁰, “ Awake, Dar-thula ! awake, thou first of women ! the wind of spring is abroad ! The flowers shake their heads on the

²⁹ *Thy sleep is long in the tomb. The morning distant far.*] MALLETT’S *William and Margaret*.

The hungry worm my sister is,
This winding sheet I wear ;
And cold and weary lasts our night,
Till that last morn appear.

³⁰ *The sun shall not come to thy bed, and say.*] GRAY’S *Elegy*.
The breezy call of incense-breathing morn——
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

green hills. The woods wave their growing leaves ³¹. Retire, O sun, the daughter of Colla is asleep. She will not come forth in her beauty. She will not move, in the steps of her loveliness !”

Such was the song of the bards, when they raised the tomb. I sung over the grave, when the king of Morven came ; when he came to green Erin to fight with car-borne Cairbar !

³¹ Awake, *Darthula*, awake, *thou first of women ! the wind of spring is abroad ! The flowers shake their heads in the green hills. The woods wave their growing leaves.*] From MILTON, *Par. Lost*, v. 17.

Awake,

My fairest, my espoused, my latest found,
Heaven's last best gift, my ever new delight,
Awake ; the morning shines, and the fresh field
Calls us ; we lose the prime, to mark how spring
Our tender plants, how blows the citron grove.

And from Milton's original, observed by Addison.

“ *Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo ! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth ; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.*” *Song of Solomon*, ii. 10. Quoted by Macpherson. “ When wilt thou *rise* in thy beauty, first of Erin's maids.” *Supra*, p. 406.

These imitations are exquisitely beautiful ; but the conclusion, “ Retire, O sun ! for the daughter of Colla is asleep,” is an instance of that false refinement which pervades the poems.

CARRIC-THURA:

A POEM.

ARGUMENT.

FINGAL, returning from an expedition which he had made into the Roman province, resolved to visit Cathulla king of Inistore, and brother to Comala, whose story is related, at large, in a preceding dramatic poem. Upon his coming in sight of Carric-thura, the palace of Cathulla, he observed a flame on its top, which, in those days, was a signal of distress. The wind drove him into a bay, at some distance from Carric-thura, and he was obliged to pass the night on the shore. Next day he attacked the army of Frothal king of Sora, who had besieged Cathulla in his palace of Carric-thura, and took Frothal himself prisoner, after he had engaged him in a single combat. The deliverance of Carric-thura is the subject of the poem, but several other episodes are interwoven with it. It appears from tradition, that this poem was addressed to a Culdee, or one of the first Christian missionaries, and that the story of the *Spirit of Loda*, supposed to be the ancient Odin of Scandinavia, was introduced by Ossian in opposition to the Culdee's doctrine. Be this as it will, it lets us into Ossian's notions of a superior being; and shews that he was not addicted to the superstition which prevailed all the world over, before the introduction of Christianity. MAC-PHERSON.

CARRIC-THURA:

A POEM.

H_{AST} thou left thy blue course in heaven, golden-haired son of the sky! ¹ The west has opened its gates; the bed of thy repose is there. The

¹ *Hast thou left thy blue course in heaven, golden-haired son of the sky.*] MILTON's *Translation of the 136th Psalm*.

And caused the *golden-tressed sun*
All the day long his course to run;
The horned moon to shine by night,
Amongst her spangled sisters bright.

The "spangled sisters of the moon" were inserted in the preceding poem of Dar-thula, ⁶. The "*golden-tressed sun all the day long his course to run*," is now introduced, as "The *golden-haired son* of the sky, who has *left* his blue course in heaven;" with an allusion, perhaps, to the *bright-haired sun* in COLLINS's *Ode to Evening*, which our author immediately proceeds to imitate.

waves come ² to behold thy beauty. They lift their trembling heads ³. They see thee lovely in thy sleep ⁴; they shrink away with fear. Rest,

² *The west has opened its gates. The bed of thy repose is there. The waves come.*] COLLINS'S *Ode to Evening*.

While now the bright-hair'd sun,
Sits in yon *western* tent, whose cloudy skirts,
With brede *etherial* wove,
O'erhang his *wavy* bed.

His *wavy* bed. "The *bed* of his repose, where the *waves* come to behold his beauty." But "the gates of the west," so frequent in Ossian, is Milton's "*Eastern gate*, where the great sun begins his state;" and "*the west has opened its gates*," is almost literally from SHAKESPEARE, *Midsummer Nights Dream*, iii. 9.

Even till the *eastern gate*, all fiery red,
Opening on Neptune with fair blessed beams.

³ *They lift their trembling heads.*] "Thou tremblest at the gates of the west." Carthou, 49. *Æneid*, viii. 9.

Splendet *tremulo* sub lumine *pontus*.
And the *sea* trembled with her silver light.

DRYDEN.

Rape of the Lock, ii. 48.

The *sun-beams* trembling on the floating tides.
Upon such slight hints are the imitations often constructed.

⁴ *The waves come to behold thy beauty. They lift their trembling heads. They see thee lovely in thy sleep.*] *I'ar. Lost*, v. 11.

He, on his side
Leaning, half-raised, with looks of cordial love,
Hung over her enamoured, and beheld
Beauty, which, whether waking or asleep,
Shot forth peculiar graces.

The remainder of the passage, "Awake, my fairest, my espou-

in thy shady cave, O sun ! ⁵ let thy return be in joy.

But let a thousand lights arise to the sound of the harps of Selma : let the beam spread in the hall, the king of shells is returned ! The strife of Carun is past ⁶, like sounds that are no more ⁷. Raise the song, O bards ; the king is returned with his fame !

Such were the words of Ullin, when Fingal returned from war : when he returned in the fair blushing of youth, with all his heavy locks. His blue arms were on the hero ; like a light cloud on the sun, when he moves in his robes of

sed, my latest found," was transferred to Dar-thula, ³¹. Much as I am accustomed to Macpherson's plagiarisms, I am lost in astonishment at such unexpected imitations.

⁵ Rest in thy shadowy cave, O sun !] *Samson Agonistes*.

Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.

⁶ Ossian has celebrated the *strife of Crona* in a particular poem. This poem is connected with it ; but it was impossible for the translator to procure that part which relates to Crona, with any degree of purity. MACPHERSON.

In the first editions, "The strife of *Crona* is past ;" but as Fingal had also returned in Carthon from the strife of Crona, the text was altered in the improved editions, without a correspondent alteration in the notes.

⁷ *The strife of Carun is past, like sounds that are no more.*] "For all our days are *passed* away in thy wrath, we spend our years like a *tale* that is *told*." *Psalms*, xc. 9.

mist, and shews but half his beams ⁸. His heroes follow the king : the feast of shells is spread. Fingal turns to his bards, and bids the song to rise.

“Voices of echoing Cona,” he said, “O bards of other times ! Ye, on whose souls the blue hosts of our fathers rise ! strike the harp in my hall ; and let me hear the song. Pleasant is the joy of grief ! it is like the shower of spring, when it softens the branch of the oak, and the young leaf rears its green head ⁹. Sing on, O

⁸ *When he moves in his robes of mist, and shews but half his beams.*] *Par. Lost*, i. 595.

Looks through the horizontal *misty* air
Shorn of his *beams*.

JEROM STONE'S *May Morning*.

And Venus' orb was *shorn* of *half* its *beams*.

To trace the natural association of ideas, the context in Milton, “Disastrous twilight sheds, on *half* the nations,” produced, in Stone's imitation, “The orb of Venus shorn of *half* its beams ;” and in Macpherson, “The darkened *half* of the moon, behind its growing light.” *Death of Cuthullin*, 4.

⁹ *Like the shower of spring, when it softens the branch of the oak, and the young leaf rears its green head.*] The original has been often repeated ; “As the small rain upon the *tender* herb, and as the *showers* upon the grass.” *Deut.* xxxii. 2. But the concomitant imagery, “The *shower* of *spring*, when the *young leaf* rears its green head,” is from POPE'S *Odyssey*, ix. 55.

bards, to-morrow we lift the sail. My blue course is through the ocean, to Carric-thura's walls ; the mossy walls of Sarno, where Comala dwelt. There the noble Cathulla spreads the feast of shells. The boars of his woods are many ; the sound of the chace shall arise ! ”

“ Cronnan ¹⁰, son of the song ! ” said Ullin,

Thick as the *budding leaves* and rising flowers

O'erspread the land, when *spring* descends in *showers*.

And “ the leaf *rears its green head* ; ” “ *green-headed Erin* ; ” and in the Battle of Lora, 4, “ the *green heads* of the *mountains* smile,” are from THOMSON'S *Spring*.

And *mountains lift their green heads* to the skies.

¹⁰ One should think, that the parts of Shilric and Vinvela were represented by Cronnan and Minona, whose very names denote that they were singers, who performed in public. Cronnan signifies *a mournful sound*, Minona, or Mìn-’ónn, *soft air*. All the dramatic poems of Ossian appear to have been presented before Fingal, upon solemn occasions. MACPHERSON.

This, and the next episode, are the Two first Fragments, inserted in Carric-thura as a dramatic interlude, performed in the Highlands before Fingal. An heroic poem, with short dramas by way of episodes, is a species of composition unknown to Aristotle ; and we may conceive the improvement of which the *Æneid* would have been susceptible, if Virgil had introduced his pastorals as dramatic poems, exhibited before *Æneas* at the courts of Dido, Acestes, or Evander. Dramatic representation, indeed, was unknown to Homer ; but by the employment of females to personate female characters, Ossian's Celtic theatre, of the third century, has not only outstript the Grecian drama, but anticipated the improvements of the French and English stage.

Minona, graceful at the harp ! raise the tale of Shilric, to please the king of Morven. Let Vinvela come in her beauty, like the showery bow, when it shews its lovely head on the lake, and the setting sun is bright. She comes, O Fingal ! her voice is soft, but sad.

VINVELA.

My love is a son of the hill. He pursues the flying deer. His grey dogs are panting around him ; his bow-string sounds in the wind. Dost thou rest by the fount of the rock, or by the noise of the mountain-stream " ? the rushes are nodding to the wind, the mist flies over the hill. I will approach my love unseen ; I will behold him from the rock. Lovely I saw thee first by the aged oak of Branno ; thou wert returning tall from the chace ; the fairest among thy friends.

SHILRIC.

What voice is that I hear ? that voice like the summer-wind ! I sit not by the nodding rushes ; I hear not the fount of the rock. Afar, Vinvela,

" *Dost thou rest by the fount of the rock, or by the noise of the mountain stream.*] "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon." *Song of Solomon*, i. 7.

afar, I go to the wars of Fingal. My dogs attend me no more. No more I tread the hill. No more from on high I see thee, fair-moving by the stream of the plain; bright as the bow of heaven; as the moon on the western wave.

VINVELA.

Then thou art gone, O Shilric! I am alone on the hill! The deer are seen on the brow; void of fear they graze along. No more they dread the wind; no more the rustling tree. The hunter is far removed, he is in the field of graves. Strangers! sons of the waves! spare my lovely Shilric!

SHILRIC.

If fall I must in the field, raise high my grave, Vinvela. Grey stones and heaped-up earth shall mark me to future times. When the hunter shall sit by the mound, and produce his food at noon¹², "Some warrior rests here," he will say; and my

¹² When the hunter shall sit by the mound, and produce his food at noon.] *Iliad*, xi. 86.

ἤμωσ δὲ ἀπύτομος περὶ ἀνῆς ὀππαισσετο δόριον
Οὐρεὸς ἐν βησσησιν.

*What time, in some sequester'd vale,
The weary woodman spreads his sparing meal.*

POPE.

fame shall live in his praise¹³. Remember me,
Vinvela, when low on earth I lie !

VINVELA.

Yes ! I will remember thee ; alas ! my Shilrie
will fall ! What shall I do, my love ! when thou
art for ever gone ? Through these hills I will
go at noon : I will go through the silent heath.
There I will see the place of thy rest, returning
from the chace. Alas ! my Shilric will fall ; but
I will remember Shilric.

And I remember the chief, said the king of
woody Morven ; he consumed the battle in his
rage. But now my eyes behold him not. I met
him, one day, on the hill : his cheek was pale ;
his brow was dark. The sigh was frequent in
his breast : his steps were towards the desert.
But now he is not in the crowd of my chiefs,
when the sounds of my shields arise. Dwells he
in the narrow house, the chief of high Carmora !

Cronnan ! said Ullin of other times, raise the

¹³ *Some warrior rests here, he will say, and my fame shall live
in his praise.*] POPE'S *Iliad*, vii. 101.

Thus shall he say, a valiant Greek lies here,

By Hector slain, the godlike man of war.

The stone shall tell your vanquish'd hero's name,

And distant ages learn the victor's fame.

song of Shilric ¹⁴; when he returned to his hills, and Vinvela was no more. He leaned on her grey mossy stone; he thought Vinvela lived. He saw her fair moving on the plain: but the bright form lasted not; the sun-beam fled from the field, and she was seen no more. Hear the song of Shilric, it is soft, but sad!

I sit by the mossy fountain; on the top of the hill of winds. One tree is rustling above me. Dark waves roll over the heath. The lake is troubled below. The deer descend from the hill. No hunter at a distance is seen ¹⁵. It is mid-day; but all is silent. Sad are my thoughts alone. Didst thou but appear, O my love, a wanderer on the heath! thy hair floating on the wind behind thee; thy bosom heaving on the sight; thine eyes full of tears for thy friends, whom the mist of the hill had concealed! Thee I would

¹⁴ *The song of Shilric.*] The second Fragment, introduced by the conversation between Fingal and Ullin.

¹⁵ *No hunter at a distance is seen.*] In the Fragments, and in the first editions of Ossian, "No hunter at a distance is seen. No whistling cowherd is nigh:" From MILTON'S *L'Allegro*.

Where the ploughman, near at hand,

Whistles o'er the furrowed land.

But "the whistling cowherd nigh," was silently suppressed in the improved edition.

comfort, my love, and bring thee to thy father's house ¹⁶.

But is it she that there appears, like a beam of light on the heath? bright as the moon in autumn, as the sun in a summer-storm ¹⁷, comest thou, O maid, over rocks, over mountains to me ¹⁸? She speaks; but how weak her voice! like the breeze in the reeds of the lake.

¹⁶ *Didst thou but appear, O my love, a wanderer on the heath! —thy bosom heaving on the sight;—Thee I would comfort, my love, and bring thee to thy father's house.*] “O that thou wert as my brother, that sucked the *breasts* of my mother; when I should *find thee* without, *I would kiss thee*; yea, I should not be despised. I would lead thee, and *bring thee* into my mother's house.” *Song of Solomon*, viii. 1.

“Thee I would *comfort, my love*,” (“Stay me with flaggons, *comfort me* with apples; for I am sick of *love*.” *Id.* ii. 5.) is a substitute for the kisses of Solomon's spouse, which, as quite unsuitable to the superior delicacy of our Celtic heroines, are more carefully avoided in Ossian, than even the human beard. But in those primitive times, when the bosom heaved perpetually on the sight, kisses were unknown.

¹⁷ *But is that she that there appears, like a beam of light on the heath? bright as the moon in autumn, as the sun in a summer storm.*] “Who is *she* that *looketh* forth as the morning; fair as the *moon*; clear as the *sun*, and terrible as an army with banners.” *Song of Solomon*, vi. 10.

¹⁸ *Comest thou, O maid, over rocks, over mountains to me.*] From a Scotch Song which I remember to have heard.

Over hill, over dale, over high mountains.

“Returnest thou safe from the war? Where are thy friends, my love? I heard of thy death on the hill; I heard, and mourned thee, Shilric! Yes, my fair, I return; but I alone of my race. Thou shalt see them no more; their graves I raised on the plain. But why art thou on the desert hill? Why on the heath alone?”

“Alone I am, O Shilric! alone in the winter-house. With grief for thee I fell. Shilric, I am pale in the tomb.”

She fleets, she sails away; as mist before the wind! and, wilt thou not stay, Vinvela? Stay and behold my tears! fair thou appearest, Vinvela! fair thou wast when alive!

By the mossy fountain I will sit; on the top of the hill of winds. When mid-day is silent around, O talk with me, Vinvela! come on the light-winged gale! on the breeze of the desert, come! Let me hear thy voice, as thou passest, when mid-day is silent around!¹⁹

Such was the song of Cronnan, on the night of Selma's joy. But morning rose in the east; the blue waters rolled in light. Fingal bade his sails to rise; the winds came rustling from their

¹⁹ *When mid-day is silent around.*] Fingal, i. 60.

hills. Inistore rose to sight, and Carric-thura's mossy towers ! But the sign of distress was on their top: the warning flame edged with smoke²⁰. The king of Morven struck his breast : he assumed, at once, his spear. His darkened brow bends forward to the coast : he looks back to the lagging winds. His hair is disordered on his back. The silence of the king is terrible !

²⁰ *Inistore rose to sight ; and Carric-thura's mossy towers. But the sign of distress was on their top : the warning flame edged with smoke.*] Literally from POPE's *Iliad*, xviii. 245.

As when from some beleagured town arise
The *smokes*, high curling to the shaded skies ;
(Seen from some island o'er the main afar,
When men distressed hang out the *sign* of war.)
Soon as the sun in ocean hides his rays,
Thick on the hills the *flaming beacons* blaze ;
With long projected beams the seas are bright,
And heaven's high arch reflects the ruddy light.

The *flaming beacons*, in Macpherson's *Homer* (ii. 218.), the *warning fires*, and the *smokes*, which men distressed hang out the *sign* of war, are the *warning flame* edged with *smoke*, the *sign* of distress from Carric-thura's mossy towers (some beleagured town), seen, by Fingal, in an island o'er the main afar. But the warning flame edged with smoke, is an incongruous combination of two distinct images ; as the flame can no more be seen by day, than the smoke by night. Had our translator ever beheld the Orkneys, when involved in summer, as at this present moment, in clouds of smoke from their numerous kelp-kilns, he would have perceived the extreme accuracy and propriety of Homer's description.

Night came down on the sea ; Rotha's bay received the ship. A rock bends along the coast with all its echoing wood. On the top is the circle of Loda²¹, the mossy stone of power ! A narrow plain spreads beneath, covered with grass and aged trees, which the midnight winds, in their wrath, had torn from the shaggy rock. The blue course of a stream is there ! the lonely blast of ocean pursues the thistle's beard. The flame of three oaks arose ; the feast is spread around : but the soul of the king is sad, for Carric-thura's chief distrest.

The wan, cold moon rose, in the east. Sleep descended on the youths ! Their blue helmets glitter to the beam ; the fading fire decays. But sleep did not rest on the king ; he rose in the midst of his arms, and slowly ascended the hill to behold the flame of Sarno's tower.

The flame was dim and distant ; the moon hid her red face in the east. A blast came from the mountain ; on its wings was the spirit of Loda.

²¹ *The circle of Loda* is supposed to be a place of worship among the Scandinavians, as the spirit of Loda is thought to be the same with their god Odin. MACPHERSON.

For the Circle and Spirit of Loda, see *Temora*, v. n. 11. and *Dissertation on the supposed Authenticity of Ossian's Poems*.

He came to his place in his terrors, and shook his dusky spear. His eyes appeared like flames in his dark face ; his voice is like distant thunder ²². Fingal advanced his spear in night, and raised his voice on high.

Son of night retire : call thy winds and fly ! Why dost thou come to my presence, with thy shadowy arms ? Do I fear thy gloomy form, spirit of dismal Loda ? Weak is thy shield of clouds ; feeble is that meteor, thy sword ²³. The blast rolls them together ; and thou thyself art lost. Fly from my presence, son of night ! call thy winds and fly !

“ Dost thou force me from my place,” replied the hollow voice ? “ The people bend before me. I turn the battle in the field of the brave ²⁴. I

²² *His voice is like distant thunder.*] POPE's *Temple of Fame*.
23.

Like broken *thunders* that at *distance* roar.

²³ *Weak is thy shield of clouds ; feeble is that meteor thy sword.*] The language of a modern, who explains his own fictions as he proceeds ; not that of the genuine Ossian, who must have believed the sword and shield of a hostile deity, to have been something more than a meteor and a cloud. If Mars, in the *Iliad*, had been no better armed, Diomed would have required no divine aid to drive him, wounded, from the field ; nor has Fingal any great merit in encountering such shadowy arms.

²⁴ *The people bend before me. I turn the battle in the field*

look on the nations and they vanish: my nostrils pour the blast of death²⁵. I come abroad on the winds²⁶: the tempests are before my face²⁷. But my dwelling is calm, above the clouds; the fields of my rest are pleasant²⁸."

of the brave.] "He bowed the heavens also—yea he sent out his arrows and scattered them; and he shot out his lightnings and discomfited them." *Psalms*, xviii. 9. 14. Quoted thus by Macpherson: "There is a great resemblance between the terrors of this mock divinity and those of the true God, as they are described in the 18th Psalm." *Ossian*, 1st edit.

²⁵ *I look on the nations and they vanish: my nostrils pour the blast of death.*] By the blast of God they perish, by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed." *Job*, iv. 9. "There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured.—And the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils." *Psalm*, xviii. 8. 15.

²⁶ *I come abroad on the winds.*] "And he rode upon a cherub and did fly; yea he did fly upon the wings of the wind." *Id.* 10. Or rather from Sternhold's translation, as quoted by Pope.

On wings of wind came flying all abroad.

²⁷ *The tempests are before my face.*] "At the brightness that was before him thick clouds passed; hailstones and coals of fire." *Id.* 10. Or, to conceal the imitation, "The tempests are before his face," from Tate and Brady's translation of the same verses.

On a strong tempest's rapid wing,—

With thickest shades his face to veil.

²⁸ *But my dwelling is calm above the clouds; the fields of my rest are pleasant.*] "I will ascend above the heights of the

“Dwell in thy pleasant fields,” said the king :
 “Let Comhal’s son be forgot. Do my steps
 ascend from my hills, into thy peaceful plains ?
 Do I meet thee with a spear, on thy cloud,
 spirit of dismal Loda ²⁹ ? Why then dost thou
 frown on me ? why shake thine airy spear ³⁰ ?
 Thou frownest in vain : I never fled from the
 mighty in war. And shall the sons of the wind
 frighten the king of Morven ? No : he knows
 the weakness of their arms !”

“Fly to thy land,” replied the form : “receive
 the wind and fly ! The blasts are in the hollow
 of my hand ³¹ : the course of the storm is mine.
 The king of Sora is my son, he bends at the

clouds.” *Infra*, ²⁹. “He made darkness his *secret place* ; his
pavilion round about him were dark waters, and thick *clouds*
of the skies.” *Id.* 9. 11.

²⁹ *Do my steps ascend from my hills into thy peaceful plains ?
 Do I meet thee with a spear in thy cloud, spirit of dismal Loda ?*]
 “For thou hast said in thy heart, I will *ascend* into *heaven*.---
 I will *ascend above* the heights of the *clouds*. I will *be like the*
Most High.” *Isaiah*, xiv. 13.

³⁰ *Why shake thine airy spear.*] *DRYDEN’S Æneid*, vi. 650.

And proud Idæus, Priam’s charioteer,

Who *shakes* his empty reins, and aims his *airy spear*.

³¹ *The blasts are in the hollow of my hand.*] “Who hath
 measured the *waters* in the *hollow* of his *hand*.” *Isaiah*, xl. 12.

The preceding imitations require no comment.

stone of my power. His battle is around Car-
ric-thura; and he will prevail! Fly to thy land,
son of Comhal, or feel my flaming wrath!"

He lifted high his shadowy spear! He bent
forward his dreadful height. Fingal, advan-
cing, drew his sword; the blade of dark-brown
Luno³². The gleaming path of the steel winds
through the gloomy ghost³³. The form fell
shapeless into air³⁴, like a column of smoke,

³² The famous sword of Fingal, made by Lun, or Luno, a
smith of Lochlin. MACPHERSON.

³³ *The gleaming path of the steel winds through the gloomy
ghost.*] *Par. Lost*, vi. 329.

The *griding sword*, with discontinuous wound,
Passed *through him*: But th' ethereal substance closed,
Not long divisible.

³⁴ *The form fell shapeless into air.*] In *Paradise Lost*,
vi. 348.

"Spirits that move throughout,
Nor in their liquid texture, mortal wound
Receive, no more than can the *fluid air*."

On which Bishop Newton's note directed our author to Mil-
ton's original. SHAKESPEARE, *Macbeth*, v. 7.

As easy mayst thou the *intrenchant air*

With thy *keen sword impress*, as make me bleed.

Or, "The form fell *shapeless* into *air*, like a column of smoke,
which the *staff* of the boy *disturbs* as it rises," &c. But "the
form fell shapeless," was suggested by the context in Milton,
id. 351.

which the staff of the boy disturbs, as it rises from the half-extinguished furnace.

The spirit of Loda shrieked, as, rolled into himself, he rose on the wind ³⁵. Inistore shook at the sound. The waves heard it on the deep. They stopped in their course with fear ³⁶: the friends of Fingal started, at once; they took their heavy spears. They missed the king; they rose in rage; all their arms resound !

The moon came forth in the east. Fingal returned in the gleam of his arms. The joy of his youth was great, their souls settled, as a sea from a storm ³⁷. Ullin raised the song of glad-

And as they please,

They limb themselves, and colour, *shape*, or size

Assume, as likes them best, condense or rare.

³⁵ *The spirit of Loda shrieked, as, rolled into himself, he rose on the wind.*] Par. Lost, vi. 327.

Then Satan first knew pain,

And writh'd him to and fro convolv'd : so sore

The griding sword, &c.

³⁶ *Inistore shook at the sound. The waves heard it on the deep. They stopped in their course with fear.*] *Æneid*, iii. 672.

Clamorem immensum tollit ; quo pontus et omnes

Intremuere undæ ; penitusque exterrita tellus

Italix ; curvisque immugiit Ætna cavernis.

³⁷ *Their souls settled as a sea from a storm.*] Vide *Conlath and Cuthona*, 4.

ness. The hills of Inistore rejoiced. The flame of the oak arose; and the tales of heroes are told.

But Frothal, Sora's wrathful king, sits in sadness beneath a tree. The host spreads around Carric-thura. He looks towards the walls with rage. He longs for the blood of Cathulla, who, once, overcame him in war. When Annir reigned in Sora, the father of car-borne Frothal, a storm arose on the sea, and carried Frothal to Inistore. Three days he feasted in Sarno's halls, and saw the slow rolling eyes of Comala. He loved her, in the flame of youth, and rushed to seize the white-armed maid. Cathulla met the chief. The gloomy battle rose. Frothal was bound in the hall; three days he pined alone. On the fourth, Sarno sent him to his ship, and he returned to his land. But wrath darkened in his soul against the noble Cathulla. When Annir's stone of fame arose, Frothal came in his strength. The battle burned round Carric-thura, and Sarno's mossy walls.

Morning rose on Inistore. Frothal struck his dark-brown shield. His chiefs started at the sound; they stood, but their eyes were turned

to the sea. They saw Fingal coming in his strength ; and first the noble Thubar spoke. “ Who comes like the stag of the desert, with all his herd behind him ? Frothal, it is a foe ! I see his forward spear. Perhaps it is the king of Morven, Fingal, the first of men. His deeds are well known in Lochlin ; the blood of his foes is in Starno’s halls. Shall I ask the peace of kings ? His sword is the bolt of heaven ! ”

“ Son of the feeble hand,” said Frothal, “ shall my days begin in a cloud ? Shall I yield before I have conquered, chief of streamy Tora ? The people would say in Sora, Frothal flew forth like a meteor ; but a darkness has met him ; and his fame is no more. No : Thubar, I will never yield ; my fame shall surround me like light. No : I will never yield, chief of streamy Tora ! ”

He went forth with the stream of his people, but they met a rock ³⁸ : Fingal stood unmoved,

³⁸ *He went forth with the stream of his people, but they met a rock.*] *Highlander*, 127.

The Scots, a *stream*, would sweep the Danes away.

The Danes, a *rock*, repelled the Scots array.—

The ranks of Sweno *stand in firm array*,

As hoary *rocks repel the raging sea*.

“ Fingal stood unmoved, broken they rolled back from his side.”

broken they rolled back from his side. Nor did they safely fly ; the spear of the king pursued their steps. The field is covered with heroes. A rising hill preserved the foe.

Frothal saw their flight. The rage of his bosom rose. He bent his eyes to the ground, and called the noble Thubar. " Thubar ! my people are fled. My fame has ceased to arise. I will fight the king ; I feel my burning soul ! Send a bard to demand the combat. Speak not against Frothal's words ! But, Thubar ! I love a maid ; she dwells by Thano's stream, the white-bosomed daughter of Herman, Utha with soft-rolling eyes. She feared the low-laid Comala ; her secret sighs rose, when I spread the sail. Tell to Utha of harps, that my soul delighted in her !"

Such were his words, resolved to fight. The soft sigh of Utha was near ! She had followed her hero, in the armour of a man. She rolled her eye on the youth, in secret, from beneath her steel. She saw the bard as he went ; the spear fell thrice from her hand ³⁹ ! Her loose hair flew

³⁹ *The soft sigh of Utha was near. She had followed her hero, in the armour of a man. She rolled her eye--from beneath*

on the wind. Her white breast rose, with sighs. She raised her eyes to the king. She would speak, but thrice she failed.

Fingal heard the words of the bard ; he came in the strength of his steel. They mixed their deathful spears : They raised the gleam of their arms. But the sword of Fingal descended and cut Frothal's shield in twain ⁴⁰. His fair side is

a glittering helmet.---*The spear fell thrice from her hand.*] *First edit. Highlander, iii. 213.*

The fair Aurelia by the *hero's side*,
An awful warrior, and a blooming bride,
Who placed on martial deeds her virgin care,
Wields in her snowy *hand* the ashen *spear*.
A silver mail hung round her slender waist,
The corslet *rises* on her *heaving breast* ;
On her white arm the brazen buckler shews,
The *shining helm* embraced her marble brows ;
Her twining *ringlets* flowing down behind
Sung grateful music to the nightly *wind*.

" Her loose hair flew on the wind. Her white breast rose with sighs." Inabaca, Darthula, Utha, Crimora, Colmal, Sulmalla, and the eternal ladies in mail, are all a repetition of Aurelia, who " had followed her hero, over the sea (1st edit.) in the armour of a man ;"

And with the gallant warrior clothes the wife,
Following her Haco to the bloody strife *Id.*

⁴⁰ But the sword of *Fingal* descended and cut *Frothal's shield* in twain.] *Par. Lost, vi. 320.*

exposed ; half-bent he foresees his death. Darkness gathered on Utha's soul. The tear rolled down her cheek. She rushed to cover the chief with her shield ; but a fallen oak met her steps. She fell on her arm of snow ; her shield, her helmet flew wide. Her white bosom heaved to the sight ; her dark-brown hair is spread on earth.

Fingal pitied the white-armed maid ! he stayed the uplifted sword. The tear was in the eye of the king, as, bending forward, he spoke. " King of streamy Sora ! fear not the sword of Fingal. It was never stained with the blood of the vanquished ; it never pierced a fallen foe. Let thy people rejoice by thy native streams. Let the maids of thy love be glad. Why shouldst

But the sword

*Of Michael, from the armoury of God,
Was given him tempered so, that neither keen
Nor solid might resist that edge : It met
The sword of Satan, with steep force to smite
Descending, and in half cut sheer ; nor staid,
But with swift wheel reverse, deep entering, shar'd
All his right side.*

" His *fair side* is exposed," and in the next paragraph, with swift wheel reverse, " Fingal *stayed* the uplifted sword." Macpherson still thought of the combat between Michael and Satan, and adopted, perhaps insensibly, the expressions and attitudes that dwelt upon his mind.

thou fall in thy youth, king of streamy Sora ?”
 Frothal heard the words of Fingal, and saw
 the rising maid : they stood in silence, in their
 beauty ; like two young trees of the plain, when
 the shower of spring is on their leaves, and the
 loud winds are laid ⁴¹.

⁴¹ *They stood in silence in their beauty ; like two young trees of the plain, when the shower of spring is on their leaves, and the loud winds are laid.*] The original of this simile, which is truly beautiful, and which I once considered as Macpherson’s own, is to be found in Apollonius Rhodius, where he describes the interview between Medea and Jason. *Argonaut*, iii. 967.

Τὼ δ’ ΑΝΕΩ καὶ ΑΝΑΥΔΟΙ ΕΦΕΣΤΑΣΑΝ ἀλληλοισιν,
 ἥ ΔΡΥΣΙΝ, ἥ ΜΑΚΡΗΣΙΝ ΒΕΙΔΟΜΕΝΟΙ ΕΛΑΤΗΣΙΝ,
 “Αἰ τε παρ᾽ αὖσσον ΕΚΗΛΟΙ ἐν ἔρξιν ἐρρίζωνται,
 ΝΗΝΕΜΙΗ· μετὰ δ’ αὖτις ὑπὸ ῥίπῃς ΑΝΕΜΟΙΟ
 Κινυμένας ὑμαδῆσαν ἀπειριτόν,

No more her knees their wonted office knew,
 Fixed without motion as to earth she grew :
 Her train recedes ; the meeting lovers gaze
 In silent wonder and in still amaze :
 As two fair cedars on the mountain brow,
 Pride of the groves ! with roots adjoining grow ;
 Erect and motionless the stately trees
 Awhile remain, while sleeps each fanning breeze,
 Till from th’ Æolian caves a blast unbound
 Bends their proud tops, and bids their boughs resound.

BROOM.

“ And the loud winds are laid,” μετὰ δ’ αὖτις ὑπὸ ῥίπῃς ἀνέμοιο.
 “ But the tempest is soon to arise,” transferred to *Fingal*, iv. ²⁴.
 It is not likely that Macpherson had read the *Argonautics*, of

“ Daughter of Herman,” said Frothal, “ didst thou come from Tora’s streams; didst thou come, in thy beauty, to behold thy warrior low? But he was low before the mighty, maid of the slow-rolling eye! The feeble did not overcome the son of car-borne Annir! Terrible art thou, O king of Morven! in battles of the spear. But, in peace, thou art like the sun ⁴², when he looks through a silent shower: the flowers lift their fair heads before him; the gales shake their rustling wings. O that thou wert in Sora! that my feast were spread! The future kings of Sora would see thy arms and rejoice. They would rejoice at the fame of their fathers, who beheld the mighty Fingal!”

which he would have otherwise availed himself more frequently in Ossian; but his attention was directed to the passage in question by Broom’s translation.

⁴² *In peace thou art like the sun.*] A variation of *Fingal*, vi. 9. But the *silent* shower is from the preceding simile; “ They stood in *silence*, &c.---when the *shower* of *spring* is on their leaves:” and “ The *flowers lift* their *fair heads*,” is the remainder of the former imitation of POPE’s *Odyssey*, “ When the *young leaf rears* its *green head*.” Supra, 9.

Thick as the *budding leaves* and *rising flowers*

O’erspreads the land, when *spring* descends in *showers*.

with the word omitted in the imitation of Thomson;

And mountains **LIFT** their *green heads* to the skies.

“ Son of Annir,” replied the king, “ the fame of Sora’s race shall be heard ! When chiefs are strong in war, then does the song arise ! But if their swords are stretched over the feeble ; if the blood of the weak has stained their arms ; the bard shall forget them in the song, and their tombs shall not be known. The stranger shall come and build there, and remove the heaped-up earth. An half-worn sword shall rise before him ; bending above it he will say, “ These are the arms of the chiefs of old ⁴³, but their names are not in song.” Come thou, O Frothal, to the feast of Inistore ; let the maid of thy love be there ; let our faces brighten with joy !”

Fingal took his spear, moving in the steps of his might ⁴⁴. The gates of Carric-thura are

⁴³ *The stranger shall come---and remove the heaped-up earth. An half-worn sword shall rise before him. Bending above it he will say, “ These are the arms of the chiefs of old.”] “ And their tombs shall not be known.” Georg. i. 493.*

Scilicet et tempus veniet, quum finibus illis.

Agricola, incurvo terram molitus aratro,

Exesa inveniet scabra rubigine pila,

Aut gravibus rastris galeas pulsabit inanes ;

Grandiaque effossis mirabitur ossa sepulchris.

⁴⁴ *Moving in the steps of his might.] The steps of his strength shall be straitened. Job, xviii. 4.*

opened wide. The feast of shells is spread. The soft sound of music arose. Gladness brightened in the hall. The voice of Ullin was heard; the harp of Selma was strung. Utha rejoiced in his presence, and demanded the song of grief; the big tear hung in her eye, when the soft Crimora spoke. Crimora, the daughter of Rinval, who dwelt at Lotha's roaring stream! The tale was long, but lovely; and pleased the blushing Utha.

CRIMORA.

Who cometh from the hill, like a cloud tinged with the beam of the west? Whose voice is that, loud as the wind, but pleasant as the harp of Carril? It is my love in the light of steel; but sad is his darkened brow! Live the mighty race of Fingal? or what darkens in Connal's soul?

CONNAL.

They live. They return from the chace, like a stream of light. The sun is on their shields. Like a ridge of fire they descend the hill. Loud is the voice of the youth! the war, my love, is near! To-morrow the dreadful Dargo comes to

try the force of our race. The race of Fingal he defies ; the race of battle and wounds !

CRIMORA.

Connal, I saw his sails like grey mist on the dark-brown wave. They slowly came to land. Connal, many are the warriors of Dargo !

CONNAL.

Bring me thy father's shield ; the bossy, iron shield of Rinval ; that shield like the full-orbed moon, when she moves darkened through heaven.

CRIMORA.

That shield I bring, O Connal ; but it did not defend my father. By the spear of Gormar he fell. Thou may'st fall, O Connal !

CONNAL.

Fall I may ! But raise my tomb, Crimora ! Grey stones, a mound of earth, shall send my name to other times. Bend thy red eye over my grave, beat thy mournful heaving breast. Though fair thou art, my love, as the light ; more pleasant than the gale of the hill ⁴⁵ ; yet

⁴⁵ *Though fair thou art, my love, as the light ; more pleasant than the gale of the hill.*] Behold thou art fair, my love,

I will not here remain. Raise my tomb, Crimora !

CRIMORA.

Then give me those arms that gleam ; that sword, and that spear of steel. I shall meet Dargo with Connal, and aid him in the fight. Farewell, ye rocks of Ardven ! ye deer ! and ye

behold *thou art fair*—Behold *thou art fair*, my beloved, *yea pleasant* : also our bed is green. *Song of Solomon*, i. 15.

This and the next episode are the Fourth and Fifth fragments, introduced, by a faculty the reverse of the second sight, as dramatic interludes of the third century, performed at Carricthura, a house of my own, about 1400 years before the house was built. The origin or fabrication of the name, from *Thura* a place in Caithness, or perhaps from *Tuire*, a tower, (*Carrick thura's*, mossy towers,) and from *Carrick*, a house built by the earl of Carrick (1633) in one of the Orkney isles, has been explained in the *Dissertation on the supposed Authenticity of Ossian's Poems*. From a singular coincidence of circumstances, it was in this house, where I now write, that I first read the poems in my early youth, with an ardent credulity that remained unshaken for many years of my life ; and with a pleasure to which even the triumphant satisfaction of detecting the imposture is comparatively nothing. The enthusiasm with which I then read and studied the poems, enabled me afterwards, when my suspicions were once awakened, to trace and expose the deception with the greater success. Yet, notwithstanding the severity of minute criticism, I can still peruse them as a wild and wonderful assemblage of imitations, with which the fancy is often pleased and gratified, even where the judgment condemns them most.

streams of the hill ! We shall return no more.
Our tombs are distant far !

“ And did they return no more ? ” said Utha’s bursting sigh. “ Fell the mighty in battle, and did Crimora live ? Her steps were lonely ; her soul was sad for Connal. Was he not young and lovely ; like the beam of the setting sun ? ” Ullin saw the virgin’s tear, he took the softly-trembling harp : the song was lovely, but sad, and silence was in Carric-thura.

Autumn is dark on the mountains ; grey mist rests on the hills. The whirlwind is heard on the heath. Dark rolls the river through the narrow plain. A tree stands alone on the hill, and marks the slumbering Connal. The leaves whirl round with the wind, and strew the grave of the dead. At times are seen here the ghosts of the departed, when the musing hunter alone stalks slowly over the heath.

Who can reach the source of thy race, O Connal ? who recount thy fathers ? Thy family grew like an oak on the mountain, which meeteth the wind with its lofty head. But now it is torn from the earth. Who shall supply the place of Connal ? Here was the din of arms ; here the

groans of the dying. Bloody are the wars of Fingal ! O Connal ! it was there thou didst fall. Thine arm was like a storm ; thy sword a beam of the sky ; thy height, a rock on the plain ; thine eyes a furnace of fire. Louder than a storm was thy voice, in the battles of thy steel. Warriors fell by thy sword, as the thistle by the staff of a boy. Dargo the mighty came on, darkening in his rage. His brows were gathered into wrath. His eyes like two caves in a rock. Bright rose their swords on each side ; loud was the clang of their steel.

The daughter of Rinval was near ; Crimora bright in the armour of man ; her yellow hair is loose behind, her bow is in her hand. She followed the youth to the war, Connal her much-beloved. She drew the string on Dargo ; but erring she pierced her Connal. He falls like an oak on the plain ; like a rock from the shaggy hill. What shall she do, hapless maid ! He bleeds ; her Connal dies ! All the night long she cries, and all the day, “ O Connal, my love, and my friend ! ” With grief the sad mourner dies ! Earth here incloses the loveliest pair on the hill. The grass grows between the stones

of the tomb ; I often sit in the mournful shade. The wind sighs through the grass ; their memory rushes on my mind. Undisturbed you now sleep together ; in the tomb of the mountain you rest alone !

“ And soft be their rest,” said Utha, “ hapless children of streamy Lotha ! I will remember them with tears, and my secret song shall rise ; when the wind is in the groves of Tora, when the stream is roaring near. Then shall they come on my soul, with all their lovely grief ! ”

Three days feasted the kings : on the fourth their white sails arose. The winds of the north drove Fingal to Morven’s woody land. But the spirit of Loda sat, in his cloud, behind the ships of Frothal. He hung forward with all his blasts, and spread the white-bosomed sails. The wounds of his form were not forgot ; he still feared ⁴⁶ the hand of the king !

⁴⁶ The story of Fingal and the spirit of Loda, supposed to be the famous Odin, is the most extravagant fiction in all Ossian’s poems. It is not, however, without precedents in the best poets ; and it must be said for Ossian, that he said nothing but what perfectly agreed with the notions of the times concerning ghosts. They thought the souls of the dead were material, and consequently susceptible of pain. Whether a proof could be drawn

from this passage, that Ossian had no notion of a divinity, I shall leave to others to determine: it appears, however, that he was of opinion, that superior beings ought to take no notice of what passed among men. MACPHERSON.

Fingal's encounter with the spirit of Loda, for which there are precedents, as it seems, in the best poets, is obviously derived from Diomed's encounter in the *Iliad*, with Venus and with Mars, and from the combat between Hercules and Mars in Hesiod. An Irish ballad, on the combat between Fingal and Muriartick, a one-eyed monster from Lochlin, may have supplied the first hint; but the apology for the extravagance of the fiction is ridiculous; for one of the chief objections to the authenticity of Ossian is this, that, the necessary machinery of ghosts excepted, the poems have nothing marvellous in them. The early poetry of every rude nation is filled with prodigies; and as the popular tales and traditions of the Highlands, uniformly represent the Fions as a race of giants, the marvellous could have been avoided only by the genuine Ossian, living at the period actually described, in the poems, to his own contemporaries, or by Macpherson versed in all the criticism of modern times. But distance of place has the same effect with distance of time, and would have peopled the remote shores of Inistore and Lochlin, with giants, monsters, magicians, &c. precisely as Homer has introduced the Lestrygons, Circe, Sylla, the Cyclops, and Charybdis into his poetry, when he departs from Greece. Macpherson, however, adhering to the strict rules of probability, is afraid to produce any specious miracles; and aware of the *incredulus odi* of modern criticism, endeavours, as he proceeds, to explain even the necessary machinery of ghosts, by the natural appearances of moon-beams, tempests, mists, and clouds.

It is observable, as an historical fact, that Fingal, who encounters the spirit of Loda, was, in all probability, contemporary with Odin himself. According to the Saxon chronicles,

Odin lived about the year 280, according to Snoro Sturleson, about the year 220 after Christ. TURNER's *Hist. Anglo-Sax.* ii. 32. *n.* As he was unknown to Tacitus, who mentions Tuisto and his descendants as the supreme gods and founders of the German nations, the presumption is, that Odin, the hero, was not then deified; otherwise the great tutelary deity of the Goths and Germans, would not have passed unobserved by Tacitus. PINKERTON's *Introduct. Hist. Scot.* i. 383.

THE

SONGS OF SELMA.

ARGUMENT.

ADDRESS to the evening star. An apostrophe to Fingal and his times. Minona sings before the king the song of the unfortunate Colma ; and the bards exhibit other specimens of their poetical talents, according to an annual custom established by the monarchs of the ancient Caledonians. MACPHERSON.



THE
SONGS OF SELMA.

STAR of descending night! fair is thy light
in the west¹! thou liftest thy unshorn head
from thy cloud²: thy steps are stately on thy

¹ *Star of descending night! fair is thy light in the west.*] *Par. Lost*, v. 166.

Fairest of stars last in the train of *night*.
But “the star of *descending* night---in the *west*,” is from *Lycidas*, 30.

Oft till the *star* that rose at evening bright,
Towards heaven’s *descent* had sloped his *westerling* wheel.

² *Thou liftest thy unshorn head from thy cloud.*] *Par. Lost*,
x. 449.

At last, as *from a cloud*, his fulgent *head*
And shape *star-bright* appeared.

hill³. What dost thou behold in the plain? The stormy winds are laid. The murmur of the torrent comes from afar. Roaring waves climb the distant rock⁴. The flies of evening are on their feeble wings⁵; the hum of their course is on the field. What dost thou behold, fair light? But thou dost smile and depart. The waves come with joy around thee: they bathe thy lovely

"Thou *liftest thy unshorn head*;" "*Intonsaque cælo attollunt capita*." *Æn.* ix. 661.

Lift up to heaven their leafy heads unshorn.

DRYDEN.

Such combined imitations are easily explained. "The *star of evening bright*," introduced, by the association of ideas, "His shape *star-bright and fulgent head*, as from a cloud;" and that again suggested "Their leafy heads *unshorn*," from DRYDEN'S *Virgil*, upon which Macpherson's versification in the *Highlander* was partly formed. The remainder of the verse may be found in *Fingal*, i. 15. "It settles high, and *lifts its head to heaven*."

³ *Thy steps are stately on thy hill.*] *Hardyknute*.

Stately stept he east the wall,

And *stately stept* he west.

⁴ *Roaring waves climb the distant rocks.*] A happy application of Pope's ludicrous description of a cauldron upon the fire. *Odyssey*, viii. 473.

The flames *climb* round it with a fierce embrace,

The fuming waters bubble o'er the blaze.

⁵ *The flies of evening are on their feeble wings.*] GRAY.

The *insect youth* are on the wing.

hair⁶. Farewell, thou silent beam ! Let the light of Ossian's soul arise !

And it does arise in its strength ! I behold my departed friends. Their gathering is on Lora, as in the days of other years. Fingal comes like a watry column of mist ; his heroes are around : And see the bards of song, grey-haired Ullin ! stately Ryno ! Alpin⁷, with the tuneful voice ! the soft complaint of Minona ! How are ye changed, my friends, since the days of Selma's feast ? when we contended, like gales of spring, as they fly along the hill, and bend by turns the feebly-whistling grass⁸.

⁶ *The waves come with joy around thee : they bathe thy lovely hair.*] *Carrie-thura*, 4. "And bathe thy breathing tresses." COLLINS. A classical image from Homer's autumnal star, *ΛΕΛΟΥΜΕΝΟΣ ΩΚΕΑΝΟΙΟ*, *Iliad*, v. 5. and Virgil's morning star, *Æneid*, viii. 589.

Qualis ubi oceani perfusus Lucifer unda.

And bathed in ocean shoots a keener light.

POPE'S *Iliad*.

⁷ Alpin is from the same root with Albion, or rather Albin, the ancient name of Britain ; Alp, *high island*, or *country*. The present name of our island has its origin in the Celtic tongue ; so that those who derived it from any other, betrayed their ignorance of the ancient language of our country. *Brait* or *Braid*, extensive ; and *in*, land. MACPHERSON.

⁸ *Like gales of spring, as they fly along the hill, and bend by turns the feebly whistling grass.*] *Highlander*, iv. 3.

Minona came forth in her beauty ; with down-cast look and tearful eye. Her hair flew slowly on the blast, that rushed unfrequent from the hill. The souls of the heroes were sad when she raised the tuneful voice. Often had they seen the grave of Salgar, the dark dwelling of white-bosomed Colma. Colma left alone on the hill, with all her voice of song ! Salgar promised to come : but the night descended around. Hear the voice of Colma, when she sat alone on the hill !

COLMA.

It is night ; I am alone, forlorn on the hill of storms. The wind is heard in the mountain. The torrent pours down the rock. No hut receives me from the rain⁹ ; forlorn on the hill of winds !

The breezes as they pass

Sigh on the way, along the pearly grass.

The rest of the poem consists of the Tenth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Fragments, awkwardly combined by intermediate dialogue.

⁹ *The wind is heard in the mountain. The torrent pours down the rock. No hut receives me from the rain.*] These images are apparently from COLLINS's *Ode to Evening*.

But when chill-blustering winds, or driving rain,
 Forbid my willing feet, be mine the hut

That from the mountain's side

Views wilds and swelling floods.

Rise, moon ! from behind thy clouds. Stars of the night arise. Lead me, some light, to the place¹⁰, where my love rests from the chace alone ! his bow near him, unstrung : his dogs panting around him. But here I must sit alone, by the rock of the mossy stream. The stream and the wind roar aloud. I hear not the voice of my love ! Why delays my Salgar, why the chief of the hill, his promise ? Here is the rock, and here the tree ! here is the roaring stream ! Thou didst promise with night to be here. Ah ! whither is my Salgar gone ? With thee I would fly, from my father ; with thee, from my brother of pride. Our race have long been foes ; we are not foes, O Salgar !

Cease a little while, O wind ! stream, be thou

¹⁰ *Rise moon ! from behind thy clouds. Stars of the night arise ! Lead me some light to the place.*] From the benighted brothers in *Comus*, 331.

Unmuffle, ye faint *stars* ! and thou, fair *moon*,
That wou'tst to love the traveller's benison,
Stoop thy pale visage through an amber *cloud*—
Or if your influence be quite dammed up
By black usurping mists, *some gentle taper*,
Though a rush candle, from the wicker hole
Of some clay habitation, *visit us*
With thy long-levelled rule of streaming *light*.

silent a while " ! let my voice be heard around.
Let my wanderer hear me ! Salgar ! it is Colma
who calls. Here is the tree, and the rock. Sal-
gar, my love ! I am here. Why delayest thou
thy coming ? Lo ! the calm moon comes forth.
The flood is bright in the vale. The rocks are
grey on the steep. I see him not on the brow.
His dogs come not before him, with tidings of
his near approach. Here I must sit alone !

Who lie on the heath beside me ? Are they
my love and my brother ? Speak to me, O my
friends ! To Colma they give no reply. Speak
to me : I am alone ! My soul is tormented with
fears ! Ah ! they are dead ! Their swords are red
from the fight. O my brother ! my brother !
why hast thou slain my Salgar ? why, O Sal-
gar ! hast thou slain my brother ? Dear were ye
both to me ! what shall I say in your praise ?
Thou wert fair on the hill among thousands ! he
was terrible in fight. Speak to me ; hear my
voice ; hear me, sons of my love ! They are si-
lent ; silent for ever ! Cold, cold are their breasts

¹¹ *Stream, be thou silent a while.*] " Sun, be silent upon
Gibeon ; and *thou* moon in the valley of Ajalon." *Joshua*, x.
12. margin.

of clay ! Oh ! from the rock on the hill ; from the top of the windy steep, speak, ye ghosts of the dead ! speak, I will not be afraid ! Whither are ye gone to rest ? In what cave of the hill shall I find the departed ¹² ? No feeble voice is on the gale : no answer half-drowned in the storm !

I sit in my grief ! I wait for morning in my tears ! Rear the tomb, ye friends of the dead. Close it not till Colma come. My life flies away like a dream ¹³ ; why should I stay behind ? Here shall I rest with my friends, by the stream

¹² Speak ye ghosts of the dead !—*Whither are ye gone to rest ? In what cave of the hill shall I find the departed ?*]
BLAIR'S Grave. Vid. *infra*, ²⁵.

*Tell us, ye dead, will none of you, in pity
To those you left behind, disclose the secret ?
Oh ! that some courteous ghost would blab it out,
What 'tis you are, and we must shortly be.—
Tell us what 'tis to die ? Do the strict laws
Of your society forbid your speaking ?*

Imitated in Macpherson's verses on an officer killed before Quebec.

*Unfold the secrets of your world to me ;
Tell what thou art, and what I soon shall be.*

¹³ *My life flies away like a dream.*] “ He shall *fly away* as a dream, and shall not be found.” Job, xx. 7. A sentiment not very naturally employed by Colma, in the first agonies of her grief and despair.

of the sounding rock. When night comes on the hill ; when the loud winds arise ; my ghost shall stand in the blast, and mourn the death of my friends. The hunter shall hear from his booth. He shall fear but love my voice ! For sweet shall my voice be for my friends : pleasant were her friends to Colma !

Such was thy song, Minona, softly-blushing daughter of Torman. Our tears descended for Colma, and our souls were sad ! Ullin came with his harp ; he gave the song of Alpin. The voice of Alpin was pleasant : the soul of Ryno was a beam of fire ! But they had rested in the narrow house : their voice had ceased in Selma. Ullin had returned, one day, from the chace, before the heroes fell. He heard their strife on the hill ; their song was soft but sad ! They mourned the fall of Morar, first of mortal men ! His soul was like the soul of Fingal ; his sword like the sword of Oscar. But he fell, and his father mourned : his sister's eyes were full of tears. Minona's eyes were full of tears, the sister of car-borne Morar. She retired from the song of Ullin, like the moon in the west, when she foresees the shower, and hides her fair head

in a cloud. I touched the harp, with Ullin; the song of mourning rose!

RYNO.

The wind and the rain are past: calm is the noon of day. The clouds are divided in heaven. Over the green hills flies the inconstant sun¹⁴. Red through the stony vale comes down the stream of the hill¹⁵. Sweet are thy murmurs, O stream! but more sweet is the voice I hear. It is the voice of Alpin, the son of song, mourning for the dead! Bent is his head of age; red his tearful eye. Alpin, thou son of song, why alone on the silent hill? why complainest thou, as a blast in the wood; as a wave on the lonely shore?

ALPIN.

My tears, O Ryno! are for the dead; my

¹⁴ *The clouds are divided in heaven. Over the green hill flies the inconstant sun.*] THOMSON'S *Autumn*.

*The clouds fly different, and the sudden sun,
By fits effulgent, gilds th' illumined field,
And, black by fits, the shadows sweep along.*

¹⁵ *Red through the stony vale comes down the stream of the hill.*] "*Red came the river down.*" Douglas. From THOMSON'S *Autumn*.

*Red from the hills innumerable streams
Tumultuous roar.*

voice for those that have passed away. Tall thou art on the hill; fair among the sons of the vale. But thou shalt fall like Morar; the mourner shall sit on thy tomb. The hills shall know thee no more; thy bow shall lie in the hall, unstrung!

Thou wert swift, O Morar! as a roe on the desert; terrible as a meteor of fire. Thy wrath was as the storm. Thy sword in battle, as lightning in the field. Thy voice was a stream after rain; like thunder on distant hills. Many fell by thy arm; they were consumed in the flames of thy wrath. But when thou didst return from war, how peaceful was thy brow! Thy face was like the sun after rain; like the moon in the silence of night; calm as the breast of the lake when the loud wind is laid.

Narrow is thy dwelling now! dark the place of thine abode! With three steps I compass thy grave, O thou who wast so great before ¹⁶! Four

¹⁶ *With three steps I compass thy grave, O thou that was so great before!*] SHAKESPEARE, 1 *Hen. IV.* act. v. sc. 4.

When that this body did contain a spirit,
A kingdom for it *was too small a bound*;
But now *two paces* of the vilest earth
Is room enough.

stones, with their heads of moss, are the only memorial of thee. A tree with scarce a leaf, long grass, which whistles in the wind, mark to the hunter's eye the grave of the mighty Morar. Morar ! thou art low indeed. Thou hast no mother to mourn thee : no maid with her tears of love. Dead is she that brought thee forth. Fallen is the daughter of Morglan.

Who on his staff is this ? who is this, whose head is white with age ? whose eyes are red with tears ? who quakes at every step¹⁷ ? It is thy father, O Morar ! the father of no son but thee. He heard of thy fame in war ; he heard of foes dispersed. He heard of Morar's renown ; why did he not hear of his wound ? Weep, thou father of Morar ! weep ; but thy son heareth thee not. Deep is the sleep of the dead¹⁸ ; low their

¹⁷ *Who on his staff is this ?---whose head is white with age ? who quakes at every step.*] MACPHERSON'S *Hunter*.

Along the ranks slow moves the *silvered sage*,
A *staff* supports the senior's *tottering age*,
And slow enquires, O does my Allan breathe ?
Or gasped my son beneath the arms of death ?

¹⁸ *Deep is the sleep of the dead ;*] and above, “ *Narrow is thy dwelling now.*” From GRAY'S *Elegy*.

Each in his *narrow* cell for ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet *sleep*.

pillow of dust. No more shall he hear thy voice;
 no more awake at thy call. When shall it be
 morn in the grave, to bid the slumberer awake¹⁹?
 Farewell, thou bravest of men ! thou conqueror
 in the field ! but the field shall see thee no more;
 nor the dark wood be lightened with the splen-
 dour of thy steel. Thou hast left no son. The
 song shall preserve thy name. Future times

¹⁹ *Low their pillow of dust. No more shall he hear thy voice,
 no more awake at thy call. When shall it be morn in the grave,
 to bid the slumberer awake ?]* The same imitation continued.

The breezy call of incense breathing morn,
 'The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,
 The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
 No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

Grey, when the Fragments were communicated to him in MS. was unconscious of his own poetry, so complete was the deception. But the last sentiment, "When shall it be morn in the grave, to bid the slumberer awake?" is peculiarly fine; and has been imitated, not indeed very happily, by Beattie in his *Hermit*.

But when shall spring visit the mouldering urn ?
 O when shall it dawn on the night of the grave ?

The most picturesque images in Beattie's descriptive poetry are derived from Ossian; but "the spring dawning," instead of the morning, "on the night of the grave," is certainly no improvement: and the *Hermit*, an exquisite imitation of Moschus, Idyll. iii. 104. and I believe of Jortin's Latin Paraphrase, has been spoilt by the addition of two stanzas on the common-sense philosophy, or jargon of the northern schools.

shall hear of thee ; they shall hear of the fallen Morar !

The grief of all arose, but most the bursting sigh of Armin. He remembers the death of his son, who fell in the days of his youth. Carmor was near the hero, the chief of the echoing Galmal. Why bursts the sigh of Armin, he said ? Is there a cause to mourn ? The song comes, with its music, to melt and please the soul. It is like soft mist, that, rising from a lake, pours on the silent vale ²⁰ ; the green flowers are filled with dew ; but the sun returns in his strength, and the mist is gone. Why art thou sad, O Armin, chief of sea-surrounded Gorma !

Sad I am ! nor small is my cause of woe ! Carmor, thou hast lost no son ; thou hast lost no daughter of beauty. Colgar the valiant lives ; and Annira, fairest maid. The boughs of thy house ascend, O Carmor ! but Armin is the last of his race. Dark is thy bed, O Daura ! deep thy sleep in the tomb ! When shalt thou awake with thy songs ? with all thy voice of music ?

²⁰ *Like soft mist, that, rising from a lake, pours on the silent vale.*] *Par. Lost*, xii. 629.

Gliding meteorous, as evening mist,

Risen from a river, o'er a marish glides.

Arise, winds of autumn, arise ; blow along the heath ! streams of the mountains roar ! roar tempests, in the groves of my oaks ! walk through broken clouds, O moon ! show thy pale face at intervals ! bring to my mind the night, when all my children fell ; when Arindal the mighty fell ; when Daura the lovely failed ! Daura, my daughter ! thou wert fair ; fair as the moon on Fura²¹ ; white as the driven snow ; sweet as the breathing gale. Arindal, thy bow was strong. Thy spear was swift in the field. Thy look was like mist on the wave : thy shield a red cloud in a storm. Armor, renowned in war, came, and sought Daura's love. He was not long refused : fair was the hope of their friends !

Erath, son of Odgal, repined : his brother had been slain by Armor. He came disguised like a son of the sea : fair was his skiff on the wave ; white his locks of age ; calm his serious brow. Fairest of women, he said, lovely daughter of Armin ! a rock, not distant in the sea, bears a

²¹ Fuar-a, *cold island*. MACPHERSON.

In the Fragments, " Fair as the moon on the hills of *Jura* ;" altered to *Fura* ; as if the *Paps* of *Jura* were a more modern name.

tree on its side; red shines the fruit afar²². There Armar waits for Daura. I come to carry his love! She went; she called on Armar. Nought answered but the son of the rock, Armar, my love! my love! why tormentest thou me with fear? hear, son of Armar, hear: it is Daura who calleth thee! Erath the traitor fled laughing to the land. She lifted up her voice; she called for her brother and her father. Arindal! Armin! none to relieve your Daura!

Her voice came over the sea. Arindal, my son, descended from the hill; rough in the spoils of the chase. His arrows rattled by his side; his bow was in his hand²³: five dark grey dogs attend

²² *A rock not distant in the sea, bears a tree on its side; red shines the fruit afar.] In the Braes of Yarrow.*

Fair hangs the apple frae the rock;

and in JEROM STONE'S *Albin and Mey*, which our author also imitates.

Amidst Lochmay, at distance from the shore,
On a green island grew a stately tree,
With precious fruit each season covered o'er,
Delightful to the taste, and fair to see.

²³ *My son descended from the hill.---His arrows rattled by his side; his bow was in his hand.] From Apollo's descent in the Iliad, i. 44.*

ΒΗ δὲ κατ' ΟΥΛΥΜΠΙΟΙΟ καρήνων χρώμενος κῆρ,
ΤΟΞ' ὤμοισιν ἔχων, ἀμφηγεφεία τε, φασγέτην
ἘΚΛΑΓΞΑΝ δ' ἄρ' ΟΙΣΤΟΙ ἔπ' ΩΜΩΝ χρομενοιο.

his steps. He saw fierce Erath on the shore : he seized and bound him to an oak. Thick wind the thongs of the hide around his limbs; he loads the wind with his groans. Arindal ascends the deep in his boat, to bring Daura to land. Armar came in his wrath, and let fly the grey feathered shaft. It sung ; it sunk in thy heart ²⁴, O Arindal my son ! for Erath the traitor thou diedst. The oar is stopped at once : he panted on the rock, and expired. What is thy grief, O Daura, when round thy feet is poured thy brother's blood ! The boat is broken in twain. Armar plunges into the sea, to rescue his Daura or die. Sudden a blast from the hill came over the waves. He sunk, and he rose no more ²⁵.

"He descended from heaven,----On his shoulders his bow is hung ; his quiver filled with deadly shafts : which harshly rattled as he strode in his wrath." MACPHERSON'S *Homer*, i. 2. But "Arindal rough in the spoils of the chase," is preposterous ; for what else had those hunters to wear ?

²⁴ Let fly the grey feathered shaft. It sung ; it sunk in thy heart.] *Chevy Chace*.

Against Sir Hugh Montgomerie,
So right his shaft he set,
The grey goose wing that was therein,
In his heart blood was wet.

²⁵ Sudden a blast from the hill came over the waves. He sunk, and he rose no more.] An incident from MACPHERSON'S poem on *Death*.

Alone, on the sea-beat rock, my daughter was heard to complain. Frequent and loud were her cries. What could her father do? All night I stood on the shore. I saw her by the faint beam of the moon. All night I heard her cries. Loud was the wind; the rain beat hard on the hill. Before morning appeared, her voice was weak. It died away, like the evening breeze among the grass of the rocks. Spent with grief, she expired; and left thee, Armin, alone. Gone is my strength in war! fallen my pride among women! When the storms aloft arise; when the north lifts the wave on high; I sit by the sounding shore, and look on the fatal rock. Often by the setting moon, I see the ghosts of my children. Half-viewless, they walk in mournful conference together. Will none of you speak in pity? They do not regard their father ²⁶. I

When a rough *whirlwind sweeps* along the main,
And plunged him headlong in the gulphy deep,

A wave suppressed

His voice, and *sunk* him to the mighty dead.

²⁶ Will none of you speak in pity! *They do not regard their father.*] BLAIR'S *Grave*. Supra ¹².

Tell me, ye dead, *will none of you, in pity*

To those you left behind, disclose the secret?

Do the strict laws

Of your society forbid your *speaking*?

am sad, O Carmor ; nor small is my cause of woe !

Such were the words of the bards in the days of song ; when the king heard the music of harps, the tales of other times ! The chiefs gathered from all their hills, and heard the lovely sound. They praised the voice of Cona ! the first among a thousand bards ! But age is now on my tongue ; my soul has failed ! I hear, at times, the ghosts of bards, and learn their pleasant song. But memory fails on my mind. I hear the call of years ! They say, as they pass along, why does Ossian sing ²⁷ ? Soon shall he lie in the narrow house, and no bard shall raise his fame ! Roll on, ye dark-brown years ; ye bring no joy on your course ! Let the tomb open to Ossian ; for his strength has failed. The sons of song are gone to rest. My voice remains, like a blast, that roars, lonely, on a sea-surrounded rock, after the winds are laid. The dark moss whistles there ; the distant mariner sees the waving-trees !

²⁷ *I hear the call of years. They say, as they pass along, why does Ossian sing.*] YOUNG'S *Night Thoughts*, Night iv. .

I scarce can meet a monument but holds

My younger ; every date cries, Come away !

And what *recals* me ? look the world around,

And tell me what.

CALTHON AND COLMAL:

A POEM.

ARGUMENT.

THIS piece, as many more of Ossian's compositions, is addressed to one of the first Christian missionaries. The story of the poem is handed down, by tradition, thus. In the country of the Britons between the walls, two chiefs lived in the days of Fingal, Dunthalmo, lord of Teutha, supposed to be the Tweed; and Rathmor, who dwelt at Clutha, well known to be the river Clyde. Rathmor was not more renowned for his generosity and hospitality, than Dunthalmo was infamous for his cruelty and ambition. Dunthalmo, through envy, or on account of some private feuds, which subsisted between the families, murdered Rathmor at a feast; but being afterwards touched with remorse, he educated the two sons of Rathmor, Calthon and Colmar, in his own house. They growing up to man's estate, dropped some hints that they intended to revenge the death of their father, upon which Dunthalmo shut them up in two caves on the banks of Teutha, intending to take them off privately. Colmal, the daughter of Dunthalmo, who was secretly in love with Calthon, helped him to make his escape from prison, and fled with him to Fingal, disguised in the habit of a young warrior, and implored his aid against Dunthalmo. Fingal sent Ossian with three hundred men, to Colmar's relief. Dunthalmo having previously murdered Colmar, came to a battle with Ossian; but he was killed by that hero, and his army totally defeated. Calthon married Colmal, his deliverer; and Ossian returned to Morven. MACPHERSON.

CALTHON AND COLMAL:

A POEM.

PLEASANT is the voice of thy song, thou lonely dweller of the rock. It comes on the sound of the stream, along the narrow vale. My soul awakes, O stranger ! in the midst of my hall. I stretch my hand to the spear, as in the days of other years. I stretch my hand ; but it is feeble : and the sigh of my bosom grows. Wilt thou not listen, son of the rock, to the song of Ossian ? My soul is full of other times ; the joy of my youth returns. Thus the sun appears in the west, after the steps of his brightness have

moved behind a storm¹ ; the green hills lift their dewy heads : the blue streams rejoice in the vale. The aged hero comes forth on his staff² ; his grey hair glitters in the beam. Dost thou not behold, son of the rock, a shield in Ossian's hall ? It is marked with the strokes of battle ; and the brightness of its bosses has failed. That shield the great Dunthalmo bore, the chief of streamy Teutha. Dunthalmo bore it in battle before he

¹ *Thus the sun appears in the west, after the steps of his brightness have moved behind a storm.*] *Par. Lost*, ii. 469. Quoted by Macpherson, 1st edit.

As when from mountain tops the dusky clouds
Ascending, while the north wind sleeps, o'erspread
Heaven's cheerful face, the louring element
Scowls o'er the darkened landskip snow, or shower ;
If chance the *radiant sun*, with farewell sweet,
Extend his *evening* beam, the fields revive,
The birds their notes renew, and *bleating herds*
Attest their *joy*, that *hill* and *valley* ring.

“The green hills lift their dewy heads ; the blue streams rejoice in the vale.” Macpherson has also transcribed a sonnet of Spencer, quoted by Newton ; a proof that he consulted Newton's edition of Milton for parallel passages.

² *The aged hero comes forth on his staff.*] A fine addition to Milton's simile : From the *Night Thoughts*, Night iv.

Here, like a *shepherd* gazing from his *hut*,
Touching his pipe, or leaning on his *staff*,
Eager ambition's fiery chace I see.

fell by Ossian's spear. Listen, son of the rock,
to the tale of other years !

Rathmor was a chief of Clutha. The feeble dwelt in his hall. The gates of Rathmor were never shut ; his feast was always spread. The sons of the stranger came. They blessed the generous chief of Clutha. Bards raised the song, and touched the harp : joy brightened on the face of the sad ! Dunthalgo came, in his pride, and rushed into the combat of Rathmor. The chief of Clutha overcame : the rage of Dunthalgo rose. He came, by night, with his warriors ; the mighty Rathmor fell. He fell in his halls, where his feast was often spread for strangers.

Colmar and Calthon were young, the sons of car-borne Rathmor. They came, in the joy of youth, into their father's hall. They beheld him in his blood ; their bursting tears descend. The soul of Dunthalgo melted, when he saw the children of youth. He brought them to Al-teutha's ³ walls ; they grew in the house of their foe.

³ Al-teutha, or rather Balteutha, *the town of Tweed*, the name of Dunthalgo's seat. It is observable, that all the names in this poem are derived from the Gaelic language ; which is a proof that it was once the universal language of the whole island.

They bent the bow in his presence ; and came forth to his wars. They saw the fallen walls of their fathers ; they saw the green thorn in the hall. Their tears rushed forth in secret. At times their faces were sad. Dunthalmo beheld their grief : his darkening soul designed their death. He closed them in two caves, on the echoing banks of Teutha. The sun did not come there with his beams ; nor the moon of heaven by night. The sons of Rathmor remained in darkness, and foresaw their death.

The daughter of Dunthalmo wept in silence, the fair-haired, blue-eyed Colmal. Her eye had rolled in secret on Calthon ; his loveliness swelled in her soul. She trembled for her warrior ; But what could Colmal do ? Her arm could not lift the spear ; nor was the sword formed for her side. Her white breast never rose beneath a mail. Neither was her eye the terror of heroes. What canst thou do, O Colmal ! for the falling chief ? Her steps are unequal ; her hair is loose : her eye looks wildly through her tears. She

Clutha and Teutha are the Clyde and the Tweed ; and as Balclutha was Dumbarton, or the town of Clyde, Balteutha must have been Berwick upon Tweed.

came, by night, to the hall. She armed her lovely form in steel; the steel of a young warrior, who fell in the midst of his battles. She came to the cave of Calthon, and loosed the thong from his hands.

“Arise, son of Rathmor,” she said, “arise, the night is dark ! Let us fly to the king of Selma, chief of fallen Clutha ! I am the son of Lamgal, who dwelt in thy father’s hall. I heard of thy dark dwelling in the cave, and my soul arose. Arise, son of Rathmor, arise, the night is dark !” “Blest voice !” replied the chief, “comest thou from the clouds to Calthon ! The ghosts of his fathers have often descended in his dreams, since the sun has retired from his eyes, and darkness has dwelt around him. Or art thou the son of Lamgal, the chief I often saw in Clutha ? But shall I fly to Fingal, and Colmar my brother low ? Will I fly to Morven, and the hero closed in night ? No : give me that spear, son of Lamgal, Calthon will defend his brother !”

“A thousand warriors,” replied the maid, “stretch their spears round car-borne Colmar. What can Calthon do against a host so great ?

Let us fly to the king of Morven, he will come with war. His arm is stretched forth to the unhappy ; the lightning of his sword is round the weak. Arise, thou son of Rathmor ; the shadows will fly away. Arise, or thy steps may be seen, and thou must fall in youth !”

The sighing hero rose ; his tears descend for car-borne Colmar. He came with the maid to Selma's hall ; but he knew not that it was Colmal. The helmet covered her lovely face. Her bosom heaved beneath the steel ⁴. Fingal returned from the chace, and found the lovely strangers. They were like two beams of light, in the midst of the hall of shells. The king heard the tale of grief ; and turned his eyes around. A thousand heroes half-rose before him ; claiming the war of Teutha. I came with my spear from the hill ; the joy of battle rose in my breast : for the king spoke to Ossian in the midst of a thousand chiefs.

⁴ *The helmet covered her lovely face. Her bosom heaved beneath the steel.*] “ *Her breast rose beneath the steel.* First edit. From the *Highlander*, iii. 218.

The corselet rises on her heaving breast——

The shining helm embraced her marble brow.

“Son of my strength,” began the king, “take thou the spear of Fingal. Go to Teutha’s rushing stream, and save the car-borne Colmar. Let thy fame return before thee like a pleasant gale⁵; that my soul may rejoice over my son, who renews the renown of our fathers. Ossian! be thou a storm in war; but mild when the foe is low! It was thus my fame arose, O my son; be thou like Selma’s chief. When the haughty come to my halls, my eyes behold them not. But my arm is stretched forth to the unhappy. My sword defends the weak.”

I rejoiced in the words of the king. I took my rattling arms. Diaran⁶ rose at my side, and Dargo⁷, king of spears. Three hundred youths

⁵ *Let thy fame return before thee like a pleasant gale.*] POPE’S *Essay on Man*, iv. 383.

Oh! while along the stream of time thy *name*

Expanded flies, and gathers all its *fame*;

Say, shall my little bark attendant sail,

Pursue the triumph, and *partake* the *gale*?

⁶ Diaran, father of that Connal who was unfortunately killed by Crimora, his mistress. MACPHERSON.

⁷ Dargo, the son of Collath, is celebrated in other poems by Ossian. He is said to have been killed by a boar at a hunting party. The lamentation of his mistress, or wife, Mingala, over his body, is extant; but whether it is of Ossian’s composition, I cannot determine. It is generally ascribed to him, and has

followed our steps : the lovely strangers were at my side. Dunthalgo heard the sound of our approach. He gathered the strength of Teutha.

much of his manner ; but some traditions mention it as an imitation by some later bard. As it has some poetical merit, I have subjoined it.

THE spouse of Dargo comes in tears : for Dargo was no more ! The heroes sigh over Lartho's chief : and what shall sad Mingala do ? The dark soul vanished like morning mist before the king of spears : but the generous glowed in his presence like the morning star.

Who was the fairest and most lovely ? Who but Collath's stately son ? Who sat in the midst of the wise, but Dargo of the mighty deeds ?

Thy hand touched the trembling harp : Thy voice was soft as summer-winds. Ah me ! what shall the heroes say ? for Dargo fell before a boar. Pale is the lovely cheek ; the look of which was firm in danger ! Why hast thou failed on our hills, thou fairer than the beams of the sun ?

The daughter of Adqnsion was lovely in the eyes of the valiant ; she was lovely in their eyes ; but she chose to be the spouse of Dargo.

But thou art alone, Mingala ! the night is coming with its clouds ; where is the bed of thy repose ? Where but in the tomb of Dargo ?

Why dost thou lift the stone, O bard ! why dost thou shut the narrow house ! Mingala's eyes are heavy, bard ! She must sleep with Dargo.

Last night I heard the song of joy in Lartho's lofty hall. But silence dwells around my bed. Mingala rests with Dargo. MAC-PHERSON.

He stood on a hill with his host. They were like rocks broken with thunder, when their bent trees are singed and bare⁸, and the streams of their chinks have failed. The stream of Teutha rolled, in its pride, before the gloomy foe. I sent a bard to Dunthalgo, to offer the combat on the plain; but he smiled in the darkness of his pride. His unsettled host moved on the hill; like the mountain-cloud⁹, when the blast has entered its womb, and scatters the curling gloom on every side.

⁸ *He stood on a hill with his host---like rocks broken with thunder, when their bent trees are singed and bare.*] *Par. Lost*, i. 614.

With *singed* top their stately growth, though *bare*,
Stands on the blasted heath.

Varied to "*rocks broken with thunder*," from POPE'S *Temple of Fame*, 23.

Like *broken thunders* that at distance roar.

⁹ *Moved on the hill like the mountain cloud.*] *Fingal*, i. 15.
POPE'S *Iliad*, v. 643.

So when th' *embattled clouds*, in dark array,
Along the skies their *gloomy* lines display;—
The low-hung vapours, motionless and still,
Rest on the *summits* of the shaded *hill*;
Till the mass *scatters* as the *winds* arise,
Dispersed and *broken*, down the ruffled skies.

"When the *blast* has entered its womb, and *scatters* the curling *gloom* on every side."

They brought Colmar to Teutha's bank, bound with a thousand thongs. The chief is sad, but stately. His eye is on his friends ; for we stood, in our arms, whilst Teutha's waters rolled between. Dunthalmo came with his spear, and pierced the hero's side : he rolled on the bank in his blood. We heard his broken sighs. Calthon rushed into the stream : I bounded forward on my spear. Teutha's race fell before us. Night came rolling down. Dunthalmo rested on a rock, amidst an aged wood. The rage of his bosom burned against the car-borne Calthon. But Calthon stood in his grief ; he mourned the fallen Colmar ; Colmar slain in youth, before his fame arose !

I bade the song of woe to rise, to sooth the mournful chief ; but he stood beneath a tree, and often threw his spear on earth. The humid eye of Colmal rolled near in a secret tear : she foresaw the fall of Dunthalmo, or of Clutha's warlike chief. Now half the night had passed away. Silence and darkness were on the field. Sleep rested on the eyes of the heroes : Calthon's settling soul was still. His eyes were half-closed ; but the murmur of Teutha had not yet failed in

his ear. Pale, and shewing his wounds, the ghost of Colmar came : he bent his head over the hero, and raised his feeble voice.

“ Sleeps the son of Rathmor in his night, and his brother low ? Did we not rise to the chace together ? Pursued we not the dark-brown hinds ? Colmar was not forgot till he fell : till death had blasted his youth. I lie pale beneath the rock of Lona. O let Calthou rise ! the morning comes with its beams : Dunthalgo will dishonour the fallen ¹⁰. He passed away in his blast. The rising Calthou saw the steps of his departure. He rushed in the sound of his steel. Unhappy Colmar rose. She followed her hero through night, and dragged her spear behind. But when Calthou came to Lona’s rock, he found his fallen brother. The rage of his bosom rose ; he rushed

¹⁰ Sleeps the son of Rathmor in his night, and his brother low ?---Colmar was not forgot till he fell. I lie pale beneath the rock.] POPE’S *Iliad*, xxiii. 11.

The form, familiar, hovered o’er his head :
And sleeps Achilles, thus the phantom said.
Sleeps my Achilles, his Patroclus dead ?
Living I seemed his tenderest, dearest care ;
But now forgot, I wander in the air ;
Let my pale corse the rites of burial know,
And give me entrance to the realms below.

among the foe. The groans of death ascend. They close around the chief. He is bound in the midst, and brought to gloomy Dunthalgo. The shout of joy arose; and the hills of night replied.

I started at the sound: and took my father's spear. Diaran rose at my side; and the youthful strength of Dargo. We missed the chief of Clutha, and our souls were sad. I dreaded the departure of my fame. The pride of my valour rose! "Sons of Morven," I said, "it is not thus our fathers fought. They rested not on the field of strangers, when the foe was not fallen before them. Their strength was like the eagles of heaven; their renown is in the song. But our people fall by degrees. Our fame begins to depart. What shall the king of Morven say, if Ossian conquers not at Teutha? Rise in your steel, ye warriors; follow the sound of Ossian's course. He will not return, but renowned, to the echoing walls of Selma."

Morning rose on the blue waters of Teutha. Colmal stood before me in tears. She told of the chief of Clutha: thrice the spear fell from her hand. My wrath turned against the stranger:

for my soul trembled for Calthon. "Son of the feeble hand," I said, "do Teutha's warriors fight with tears? The battle is not won with grief; nor dwells the sigh in the soul of war. Go to the deer of Carmun, to the lowing herds of Teutha. But leave these arms, thou son of fear. A warrior may lift them in fight."

I tore the mail from her shoulders. Her snowy breast appeared. She bent her blushing face to the ground. I looked in silence to the chiefs. The spear fell from my hand; the sigh of my bosom rose! But when I heard the name of the maid, my crowding tears rushed down. I blessed the lovely beam of youth, and bade the battle move!

Why, son of the rock, should Ossian tell how Teutha's warriors died? They are now forgot in their land; their tombs are not found on the heath. Years came on with their storms. The green mounds are mouldered away¹¹. Scarce is

¹¹ *They are now forgot in their land; their tombs are not found on the heath.---The green mounds are mouldered away.*
From MACPHERSON'S *Night-piece*.

Yet high or low, 'tis mankind's lot,
To live in grief, and *die forgot*.

Go, on the stone inscribe thy name,
And to the marble trust thy fame;

the grave of Dunthalgo seen, or the place where he fell by the spear of Ossian. Some grey warrior, half blind with age, sitting by night at the flaming oak of the hall, tells now my deeds to his sons, and the fall of the dark Dunthalgo. The faces of youth bend sidelong towards his voice. Surprise and joy burn in their eyes ! I found Calthon bound to an oak, my sword cut the thongs from his hands. I gave him the white-bosomed Colmal. They dwelt in the halls of Teutha.

Bid half the mountain *form* thy tomb,
 The wonder of the times to come :
 The *mound* shall *sink*, the stone decay,
 The sculptured figures *wear away* :
 The bust, that proudly speaks thy praise,
 Some shepherd's *future cot* may raise ;
 While, *smiling round*, his infant son
Admires the figures on the stone.

And this last from DRYDEN'S *Virgil*, Georg. i. 666.

Amazed at antique titles on the stone.

Or, in Ossian's style, " *Surprise and joy burn in their eyes, as some grey warrior, sitting by night at the flaming oak of the hall, tells now my deeds to his sons.*"

LATHMON :

A POEM.

ARGUMENT.

LATHMON, a British prince, taking advantage of Fingal's absence on an expedition in Ireland, made a descent on Morven, and advanced within sight of Selma, the royal residence. Fingal arrived in the mean time, and Lathmon retreated to a hill, where his army was surprised by night, and himself taken prisoner by Ossian and Gaul, the son of Morni. The poem opens with the first appearance of Fingal on the coast of Morven, and ends, it may be supposed, about noon the next day. MACPHERSON.



LATHMON :

A POEM.

SELMA, thy halls are silent. There is no sound in the woods of Morven. The wave tumbles alone on the coast. The silent beam of the sun is on the field. The daughters of Morven come forth, like the bow of the shower ; they look towards green Erin for the white sails of the king. He had promised to return, but the winds of the north arose !

Who pours from the eastern hill, like a stream of darkness ? It is the host of Lathmon. He has heard of the absence of Fingal. He trusts in the wind of the north. His soul brightens with

joy. Why dost thou come, O Lathmon? The mighty are not in Selma. Why comest thou with thy forward spear? Will the daughters of Morven fight? But stop, O mighty stream, in thy course! Does not Lathmon behold these sails? Why dost thou vanish, Lathmon, like the mist of the lake? But the squally storm is behind thee: Fingal pursues thy steps!

The king of Morven had started from sleep, as we rolled on the dark-blue wave. He stretched his hand to the spear, his heroes rose around. We knew that he had seen his fathers, for they often descended to his dreams, when the sword of the foe rose over the land; and the battle darkened before us. "Whither hast thou fled, O wind!" said the king of Morven. "Dost thou rustle in the chambers of the south¹, pursuest thou the shower in other lands? Why dost thou not come to my sails? to the blue face of my seas? The foe is in the land of Morven, and the king is absent far. But let each bind on his

¹ *Dost thou rustle in the chambers of the south?*] Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the *chambers of the south*. Job, ix. 9.: Transcribed by THOMSON. *Winter*.

Till through the lucid *chambers* of the *south*,

Looked forth the joyous sun; looked forth, and smiled.

mail, and each assume his shield ². Stretch every spear over the wave : let every sword be unsheathed. Lathmon is before us with his host ; he that fled ³ from Fingal on the plains of Lona. But he returns, like a collected stream, and his roar is between our hills ⁴.

Such were the words of Fingal. We rushed

² Let each bind on *his* mail, and each assume *his* shield.] *Par. Lost*, vi. 341.

Let each

His *adamantine* coat *gird* well, and *each*

Fit well his helm, *gripe* fast his orb'd *shield*.

³ He alludes to a battle wherein Fingal had defeated Lathmon. The occasion of this first war between these heroes, is told by Ossian in another poem, which the translator has seen. MACPHERSON.

The only poem which the translator ever saw, is the Irish ballad of *Lammon-morc*, or *The Great Lammon*, the original of Lathmon. Having laid Almhuin, where Fingal resided in Ireland, under contribution, Lammon, the son of Nuavor, was attacked at last, on the *dun*, or fort, of Lammon, by the united forces of the Fions ; and, after a desperate engagement, was slain by Oscar. Of this poem, Blair, as usual, obtained the strongest attestations.

⁴ He returns *like* a collected stream, and *his* roar is between our hills.] From THOMSON'S *Winter*.

Resistless, *roaring*, dreadful, *down it comes*

From the rude mountain,

Till again *constrained*

Between two meeting *hills* it bursts away.

into Carmona's bay. Ossian ascended the hill : He thrice struck his bossy shield. The rock of Morven replied ; the bounding roes came forth. The foe was troubled in my presence : he collected his darkened host. I stood, like a cloud on the hill, rejoicing in the arms of my youth.

Morni sat beneath a tree, at the roaring waters of Strumon : his locks of age are grey : he leans forward on his staff ; young Gaul is near the hero, hearing the battles of his father. Often did he rise, in the fire of his soul, at the mighty deeds of Morni. The aged heard the sound of Ossian's shield : he knew the sign of war. He started at once from his place. His grey hair parted on his back. He remembered the deeds of other years.

"My son," he said to fair-haired Gaul, "I hear the sound of war. The king of Morven is returned, his signals are spread on the wind. Go to the halls of Strumon ; bring his arms to Morni. Bring the shield of my father's latter years ; for my arm begins to fail. Take thou thy armour, O Gaul, and rush to the first of thy battles. Let thine arm reach to the renown of thy fathers. Be thy course in the field, like the eagle's

wing⁵. Why shouldst thou fear death, my son ?
the valiant fall with fame ; their shields turn the
dark stream of danger away⁶ ; renown dwells
on their aged hairs. Dost thou not see, O Gaul,
how the steps of my age are honoured ? Morni
moves forth, and the young meet him, with
awe⁷, and turn their eyes, with silent joy, on his

⁵ *Be thy course in the field like the eagle's wing.*] THOM-
SON'S *Spring*.

Full many a league to sea

He *wings* his *course*, and preys on distant isles.

⁶ *The valiant fall with fame : their shields turn the dark
stream of danger away.*] MACPHERSON'S *Translation of Tyr-
tæus*.

He *turns* the phalanx of the foe to flight,
And rules with martial art the *tide of fight* ;
And when he *falls* amid the field of *fame*,
He leaves behind a great and lasting name.

KYMA MAXHΣ, the tide of fight ; converted, in Ossian, into
“the dark *stream of danger*, which the valiant *turn* away with
their shields.”

⁷ *Renown dwells on their aged hairs. Dost thou not see how the
steps of my age are honoured ? Morni moves forth, and the
young meet him with reverence.*] First edit. *Id.*

But if the sable hand of death he shun,
Returning victor with his *glory* won,
By *young* and old *revered* his life he'll lead,
And full of *honour* sink among the dead ;
Or with his *growing years* his *fame* will grow,
And all shall *revere* his *head of snow* ;

course. But I never fled from danger, my son ! my sword lightened through the darkness of war. The stranger melted before me ; the mighty were blasted in my presence."

Gaul brought the arms to Morni : the aged warrior is covered with steel. He took the spear in his hand, which was stained with the blood of the valiant. He came towards Fingal, his son attended his steps. The son of Comhál arose before him with joy, when he came in his locks of age.

" Chief of roaring Strumon !" said the rising soul of Fingal, " do I behold thee in arms, after thy strength has failed ? Often has Morni shone in fight, like the beam of the ascending sun ; when he disperses the storms of the hill, and brings peace to the glittering fields. But why didst thou not rest in thine age ? Thy renown is in the song. The people behold thee, and bless the departure of mighty Morni. Why didst

The higher place from every *youth* he bears,
And age shall quit him all his claim of years.

These imitations, which I have long expected, confirm my opinion, that the Translations from Tyrtæus, in Blacklock's collection, are by Macpherson himself.

thou not rest in thine age ! The foe will vanish before Fingal !”

“ Son of Comhal,” replied the chief, “ the strength of Morni’s arm has failed. I attempt to draw the sword of my youth, but it remains in its place. I throw the spear, but it falls short of the mark. I feel the weight of my shield. We decay like the grass of the hill : our strength returns no more⁸. I have a son, O Fingal, his soul has delighted in Morni’s deeds ; but his sword has not been lifted against a foe, neither has his fame begun. I come with him to war ; to direct his arm in fight. His renown will be a light to my soul, in the dark hour of my departure. O that the name of Morni were forgot among the people ! that the heroes would only say, “ Behold the father of Gaul !”

“ King of Strumon,” Fingal replied, “ Gaul shall lift the sword in fight. But he shall lift it before Fingal ; my arm shall defend his youth. But rest thou in the halls of Selma, and hear of

⁸ *We decay like the grass of the hill. Our strength returns no more.*] As for man, his *days* are as *grass*, as a flower of the *field* so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it *no more*. Psalms, ciii. 15. *Infra Oithona*, 5.

our renown. Bid the harp to be strung; and the voice of the bard to arise, that those who fall may rejoice in their fame; and the soul of Morni brighten with joy. Ossian! thou hast fought in battles: the blood of strangers is on thy spear: thy course be with Gaul, in the strife; but depart not from the side of Fingal! lest the foe should find you alone, and your fame fail in my presence."

I saw Gaul in his arms; my soul was mixed with his. The fire of the battle was in his eyes! he looked to the foe with joy. We spoke the words of friendship in secret; the lightning of our swords poured together; for we drew them behind the wood, and tried the strength of our arms on the empty air.

Night came down on Morven. Fingal sat at the beam of the oak. Morni sat at his side, with all his grey waving locks. Their words were of other times, of the mighty deeds of their fathers. Three bards, at times, touch the harp; Ullin was near with his song. He sung of the mighty Comhal; but darkness gathered on Morni's brow. He rolled his red eye on Ullin: at once ceased the song of the bard. Fingal observed the aged

hero⁹, and he mildly spoke. "Chief of Strumon, why that darkness? Let the days of other years be forgot. Our fathers contended in war; but we meet together at the feast. Our swords are turned on the foe of our land: he melts before us on the field. Let the days of our fathers be forgot, hero of mossy Strumon!"

"King of Morven," replied the chief, "I remember thy father with joy. He was terrible in battle; the rage of the chief was deadly. My eyes were full of tears, when the king of heroes fell. The valiant fall, O Fingal! the feeble remain on the hills! How many heroes have passed away, in the days of Morni! Yet I did not shun the battle; neither did I fly from the strife of the valiant. Now let the friends of Fingal rest; for the night is around; that they may rise, with strength, to battle against car-borne

⁹ *At once ceased the song of the bard. Fingal observed the aged hero.]* POPE'S *Odyssey*, viii. 583.

The king observed alone

The silent tear, and heard the secret groan;
Then to the *bard* aloud, O cease to sing——
The lay too deeply moves, then *cease* thy lay,
And o'er the *banquet* every heart be gay.

"But we meet together at the *feast*:" an alteration of Ulysses' tears at the song of the bard.

Lathmon. I hear the sound of his host, like thunder moving on the hills. Ossian ! and fair-haired Gaul ! ye are young and swift in the race. Observe the foes of Fingal from that woody hill. But approach them not, your fathers are not near to shield you. Let not your fame fall at once. The valour of youth may fail !”

We heard the words of the chief with joy. We moved in the clang of our arms. Our steps are on the woody hill. Heaven burns with all its stars¹⁰. The meteors of death fly over the field. The distant noise of the foe reached our ears. It was then Gaul spoke, in his valour : his hand half-unsheathed the sword.

“ Son of Fingal,” he said, “ why burns the soul of Gaul ? My heart beats high. My steps are disordered ; my hand trembles on my sword. When I look towards the foe, my soul lightens before me. I see their sleeping host. Tremble thus the souls of the valiant in battles of the

¹⁰ Heaven burns *with all its stars*.] THOMSON'S *Autumn*.

But when half blotted from the sky, the moon
Fainting, permits the *starry fires* to burn
With keener lustre through the depths of *heaven*.

spear" ? How would the soul of Morni rise, if we should rush on the foe ! Our renown would grow in song : Our steps would be stately in the eyes of the brave."

"Son of Morni," I replied, "my soul delights in war. I delight to shine in battle alone, to give my name to the bards. But what if the foe should prevail; can I behold the eyes of the king ! They are terrible in his displeasure, and like the flames of death. But I will not behold them in his wrath ! Ossian shall prevail, or fall. But shall the fame of the vanquished rise ? They

"*In battles of the spear.*] Not only the night's exploit, but the conversation of the two heroes, and the dispute concerning which of them should remain behind, are from VIRGIL's episode of *Nisus and Euryalus*.

"It was then *Gaul spoke* in his valour.—Why burns the soul of Gaul ? My heart beats high. My steps are disordered ; my hand trembles on my sword. When I look towards the foe, my soul lightens before me. I see their sleeping host. Tremble thus the souls of the valiant in battles of the spear ?"

Æneid, ix. 184.

Nisus ait, diine hunc ardorem mentibus addunt,
Euryale ? An sua cuique deus fit dira cupido ?
Aut pugnam, aut aliquid jamdudum invadere magnam
Mens agitat mihi, nec placida contenta quiete est.
Cernis, quæ Rutulos habeat fiducia rerum :
Lumina rara micant ; somno vinoque sepulti
Procubuere, &c.

pass like a shade away. But the fame of Ossian shall rise ! His deeds shall be like his father's. Let us rush in our arms ; son of Morni, let us rush to fight. Gaul ! if thou should'st return, go to Selma's lofty hall. Tell to Evirallin, that I fell with fame ; carry this sword to Branno's daughter. Let her give it to Oscar, when the years of his youth shall arise."

" Son of Fingal," Gaul replied, with a sigh ; " shall I return after Ossian is low ? What would my father say, what Fingal the king of men ? The feeble would turn their eyes, and say, " Behold Gaul, who left his friend in his blood ! " Ye shall not behold me, ye feeble, but in the midst of my renown. Ossian ! I have heard from my father the mighty deeds of heroes ; their mighty deeds when alone ; for the soul increases in danger."

" Son of Morni," I replied, and strode before him on the heath, " our fathers shall praise our valour, when they mourn our fall. A beam of gladness shall rise on their souls, when their eyes are full of tears. They will say, " Our sons have not fallen unknown : they spread death around them." But why should we think of the narrow

house? The sword defends the brave. But death pursues the flight of the feeble; their renown is never heard."

We rushed forward through night; we came to the roar of a stream, which bent its blue course round the foe, through trees that echoed to its sound. We came to the bank of the stream, and saw the sleeping host. Their fires were decayed on the plain¹²; the lonely steps of their scouts were distant far. I stretched my spear before me, to support my steps over the stream. But Gaul took my hand, and spoke the words of the brave. "Shall¹³ the son of Fingal rush

¹² *Their fires were decayed on the plain.*] *Lumina rara mi-*
cant. Id. But Pope's notes on the *Iliad*. x. 298. had informed our translator, that the Trojan fires were sunk and extinguished, before Diomed and Ulysses set out for the Trojan camp.

¹³ This proposal of Gaul is much more noble, and more agreeable to true heroism, than the behaviour of Ulysses and Diomed in the *Iliad*, or that of Nisus and Euryalus in the *Æneid*. MACPHERSON, 1st edit.

The superior heroism and generosity of Gaul, in which our translator exults, is such an improvement upon Homer, as Shenstone's is upon Virgil, *Ecclog*. iii. 68.

Parta meæ Veneri sunt munera, namque notavi

Ipse locum æriæ quo congregere palumbes:

which, by way of rendering Virgil more sentimental, he trans-

on the sleeping foe ? Shall he come like a blast by night, when it overturns the young trees in secret ? Fingal did not thus receive his fame, nor dwells renown on the grey hairs of Morni, for actions like these. Strike, Ossian, strike the shield, and let their thousands rise. Let them meet Gaul in his first battle, that he may try the strength of his arm."

My soul rejoiced over the warrior ; my bursting tears came down. " And the foe shall meet thee, Gaul !" I said ; " the fame of Morni's son shall arise. But rush not too far, my hero ; let the gleam of thy steel be near to Ossian. Let our hands join in slaughter. Gaul ! dost thou not behold that rock ? Its grey side dimly gleams to the stars. Should the foe prevail, let our back be towards the rock. Then shall they fear to approach our spears ; for death is in our hands !"

I struck thrice my echoing shield. The start-

lates with such improvement as the rugged Johnson pronounced a prettiness.

I have found out a gift for my fair,

I have found where the wood-pigeons breed ;

But let me that plunder forbear ;

She will say, 'twas a barbarous deed.

For he ne'er could be true, she averred, &c.

ing foe arose. We rushed on in the sound of our arms. Their crowded steps fly over the heath. They thought that the mighty Fingal was come. The strength of their arms withered away. The sound of their flight was like that of flame, when it rushes through the blasted groves ¹⁴. It was then the spear of Gaul flew in its strength; it was then his sword arose. Cremor fell; and mighty Leth. Dunthormo struggled in his blood. The steel rushed through Crotho's side, as bent, he rose on his spear; the black stream poured from the wound, and hissed on the half-extinguished oak ¹⁵. Cathmin saw the steps of the hero behind him; he ascended a blasted tree; but the spear pierced him from behind ¹⁶. Shriek-

¹⁴ *The sound of their flight was like that of flame, when it rushes through the blasted grove.*] *Æneid*, xii. 521.

Ac velut immissi diversis partibus ignes

Arentem in silvam, et virgulta sonantia lauro.

¹⁵ *The black stream poured from the wound, and hissed on the half extinguished oak.*] From the description of the Cyclops deprived of his eye by Ulysses. *POPE's Odyssey*, ix. 461.

From the pierced pupil spouts the boiling blood;

Singed are his brows, the scorching flames grow black——

The red-hot metal hisses in the lake;

Thus in his eye-ball hissed the plunging stake.

¹⁶ *He ascended a blasted tree, but the spear pierced him from behind.*] *POPE's Iliad*, v. 61.

ing, panting, he fell. Moss and withered branches pursue his fall, and strew the blue arms of Gaul.

Such were thy deeds, son of Morni, in the first of thy battles. Nor slept the sword by thy side, thou last of Fingal's race ! Ossian rushed forward in his strength ; the people fell before him ; as the grass by the staff of the boy, when he whistles along the field, and the grey beard of the thistle falls ¹⁷. But careless the youth moves

The Cretan javelin reached him *from afar*,
And *pierced* his shoulder as he *mounts* the car ;
Back from the car he *tumbles* to the ground,
And *everlasting shades* his eyes surround.

“ Shrieking, panting, he *fell*. Moss and withered branches pursue his fall.”

“ Homer takes care not to draw two persons in the same attitude : one is tumbled from his chariot ; another is slain as he *ascends* it ; a third as he endeavours to escape on foot.” POPE's note. Ibid.

¹⁷ Ossian rushed forward in his strength. The people *fell* before him ; as the grass by the staff of the boy, when—the grey beard of the thistle falls.] The people shall rush like the rushing of many waters ; but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off ; and they shall be chased as the chaff of the mountain before the wind, and thistle-down before the whirlwind. *Isaiah*, xvii. 13.

Homer compares Apollo demolishing the Grecian bulwark, to a sportive boy treading down the structures of sand which he

on; his steps are towards the desert. Grey morning rose around us; the winding streams are bright along the heath. The foe gathered on a hill; and the rage of Lathmon rose. He bent the red eye of his wrath: he is silent in his rising grief. He often struck his bossy shield; and his steps are unequal on the heath. I saw the distant darkness of the hero, and I spoke to Morni's son.

Car-borne chief of Strumon, dost thou behold the foe? They gather on the hill in their wrath. Let our steps be towards the king. He shall rise in his strength, and the host of Lathmon vanish. Our fame is around us, warrior; the eyes of the aged will rejoice. But let us fly, son of Morni, Lathmon descends the hill. "Then let our steps be slow," replied the fair-haired Gaul, "lest the foe say, with a smile, "Behold the warriors of night. They are, like ghosts, terrible in

had raised on the shore. But the boy lopping off the thistle heads with his staff, is perhaps from a passage in Livy, which Macpherson must have had frequent occasion to explain when a schoolmaster. "*Rex (Tarquinius) in hortum ædium transit, sequente nuncio filii: ibi inambulans tacitus, summa papaverum capita, dicitur baculo decussisse.*" *Liv.* i. c. 54.

darkness ; they melt away before the beam of the east ¹⁸. Ossian, take the shield of Gormar, who fell beneath thy spear. The aged heroes will rejoice, beholding the deeds of their sons."

Such were our words on the plain, when Sulmath came to car-borne Lathmon : Sulmath, chief of Dutha, at the dark-rolling stream of Duvranna ¹⁹. " Why dost thou not rush, son of Nuäth, with a thousand of thy heroes ? Why dost thou not descend with thy host, before the warriors fly ? Their blue arms are beaming to the rising light, and their steps are before us on the heath !"

" Son of the feeble hand," said Lathmon, " shall my host descend ! They are but two, son of Dutha ; shall a thousand lift their steel ! Nuäth would mourn, in his hall, for the departure of his fame. His eyes would turn from Lath-

¹⁸ *Like ghosts, terrible in darkness ; they melt away before the beam of the east.*] SHAKSPEARE, *Tempest*, v. i.

The charm dissolves apace ;

And as the *morning* steals upon the night,

Melting the darkness, &c.

¹⁹ Dubh-bhranna, *dark mountain stream*. A river in Scotland, which falls into the sea at Banff, still retains the name of Duvran. MACPHERSON.

mon, when the tread of his feet approached. Go thou to the heroes, chief of Dutha. I behold the stately steps of Ossian. His fame is worthy of my steel ! let us contend in fight."

The noble Sulmath came. I rejoiced in the words of the king. I raised the shield on my arm ; Gaul placed in my hand the sword of Mor-ni. We returned to the murmuring stream ; Lathmon came down in his strength. His dark host rolled, like clouds, behind him : but the son of Nuäth was bright in his steel !

"Son of Fingal," said the hero, "thy fame has grown on our fall. How many lie there of my people by thy hand, thou king of men ! Lift now thy spear against Lathmon ; lay the son of Nuäth low ! Lay him low among his warriors, or thou thyself must fall ! It shall never be told in my halls, that my people fell in my presence ; that they fell in the presence of Lathmon, when his sword rested by his side ²⁰ : the blue eyes of

²⁰ *It shall never be told in my halls, that my people fell in my presence---in the presence of Lathmon, when his sword rested by his side.] Chevy Chase.*

Who said, he would not have it told

To Henry our king, for shame,

That e'er my captain fought on foot,

And I stood looking on.

Cutha would roll in tears ; her steps be lonely in the vales of Dunlathmon ! ”

“ Neither shall it be told,” I replied, “ that the son of Fingal fled. Were his steps covered with darkness, yet would not Ossian fly ! his soul would meet him, and say, “ Does the bard of Selma fear the foe ? ” No : he does not fear the foe. His joy is in the midst of battle ! ”

Lathmon came on with his spear. He pierced the shield of Ossian. I felt the cold steel by my side. I drew the sword of Morni. I cut the spear in twain. The bright point fell glittering on earth. The son of Nuäth burnt in his wrath. He lifted high his sounding shield. His dark eyes rolled above it, as bending forward, it shone like a gate of brass ²¹ ! But Ossian’s spear pierced the brightness of his bosses, and sunk in a tree that rose behind. The shield hung on the

²¹ *He lifted high his sounding shield. His dark eyes rolled above it.*] *Iliad*, vii. 265.

Stern *Telamon*, behind his *ample shield*,

As from a *brazen tower*, o’erlooked the field.

“ It shone like a *gate of brass*.” From JEROM STONE’S *Albin and Mey*.

His *ample shield* that seemed a *gate of brass*.

A line naturally suggested by the association of ideas.

quivering lance ! but Lathmon still advanced ! Gaul foresaw the fall of the chief. He stretched his buckler before my sword ; when it descended, in a stream of light, over the king of Dunlathmon !

Lathmon beheld the son of Morni. The tear started from his eye. He threw the sword of his fathers on earth, and spoke the words of the brave²². “ Why should Lathmon fight against the first of men ? Your souls are beams from heaven ; your swords the flames of death ! Who can equal the renown of the heroes, whose deeds are so great in youth ? O that ye were in the halls of Nuäth, in the green dwelling of Lathmon ! then would my father say, that his son did not yield to the weak ! But who comes, a mighty stream, along the echoing heath ? the little hills are troubled before him ; a thousand ghosts are on the beams of his steel²³ ; the ghosts

²² *He threw the sword of his fathers on earth, and spoke the words of peace.*] *Highlander*, i. 240.

Young Haco from his hand the *weapon* threw,
And from his flaming breast those *accents* drew.

²³ *A thousand ghosts are on the beams of his steel.*] *Night Thoughts*, ix.

Perhaps a *thousand demigods* descend
On every *beam* we see, to walk with men.

of those who are to fall ²⁴, by the arm of the king of resounding Morven. Happy art thou, O Fingal, thy sons shall fight thy wars. They go forth before thee ; they return with the steps of their renown !”

Fingal came, in his mildness, rejoicing in secret over the deeds of his son. Morni's face brightened with gladness ; his aged eyes look faintly through tears of joy. We came to the halls of Selma. We sat around the feast of shells. The maids of song came into our presence, and the mildly blushing Evirallin ! Her hair spreads on her neck of snow ; her eye rolls, in secret, on Ossian. She touched the harp of music ; we blessed the daughter of Branno.

Fingal rose in his place, and spoke to Lathmon, king of spears. The sword of Trenmor shook by his side, as high he raised his mighty arm. “Son of Nuäth,” he said, “why dost thou

²⁴ It was thought, in Ossian's time, that each person had his attending spirit. The traditions concerning this opinion are dark and unsatisfactory. MACPHERSON.

These are the attending spirits of Christianity ; though nothing is more common, in the second sight, than to see a man's ghost before his death. *Treatise on the Second Sight*. Edin. 1763.

search for fame on Morven? We are not of the race of the feeble; our swords gleam not over the weak. When did we rouse thee, O Lathmon, with the sound of war? Fingal does not delight in battle, though his arm is strong! My renown grows on the fall of the haughty. The light of my steel pours on the proud in arms. The battle comes; and the tombs of the valiant rise; the tombs of my people rise, O my fathers! I at last must remain alone! But I will remain renowned; the departure of my soul shall be a stream of light. Lathmon! retire to thy place! Turn thy battles to other lands! The race of Morven are renowned; their foes are the sons of the unhappy!"

O I T H O N A :

A POEM.

ARGUMENT.

GAUL, the son of Morni, attended Lathmon into his own country, after his being defeated in Morven, as related in the preceding poem. He was kindly entertained by Nuäth, the father of Lathmon, and fell in love with his daughter Oithona. The lady was no less enamoured of Gaul, and a day was fixed for their marriage. In the mean time Fingal, preparing for an expedition into the country of the Britons, sent for Gaul. He obeyed, and went; but not without promising to Oithona to return, if he survived the war, by a certain day. Lathmon too was obliged to attend his father Nuäth in his wars, and Oithona was left alone at Dunlathmon, the seat of the family. Dunrommath, lord of Uthal, supposed to be one of the Orkneys, taking advantage of the absence of her friends, came and carried off, by force, Oithona, who had formerly rejected his love, into Tromathon, a desert island, where he concealed her in a cave.

Gaul returned on the day appointed; heard of the rape, and sailed to Tromathon, to revenge himself on Dunrommath. When he landed, he found Oithona disconsolate, and resolved not to survive the loss of her honour. She told him the story of her misfortunes, and she scarce ended, when Dunrommath, with his followers, appeared at the further end of the island. Gaul prepared to attack him, recommending to Oi-

thona to retire, till the battle was over. She seemingly obeyed; but she secretly armed herself, rushed into the thickest of the battle, and was mortally wounded. Gaul, pursuing the flying enemy, found her just expiring on the field: he mourned over her, raised her tomb, and returned to Morven. Thus is the story handed down by tradition; nor is it given with any material difference in the poem, which opens with Gaul's return to Dunlathmon, after the rape of Oithona.

MACPHERSON.

O I T H O N A :

A POEM.

DARKNESS dwells around Dunlathmon, though the moon shews half her face on the hill. The daughter of night turns her eyes away ; she beholds the approaching grief¹. The son of Mor-ni is on the plain : there is no sound in the hall. No long-streaming beam of light comes trembling through the gloom². The voice of Oi-

¹ *She beholds the approaching grief.*] Darkness dwelling around Dunlathmon, because the moon turns her eyes away from the approaching grief, is one of those conceits which Blair alone was unable to discover in the simplicity of Ossian.

² *No long-streaming beam of light comes trembling through the gloom.*] MILTON's *Comus*, 336. Quoted by Macpherson.

thona is not heard amidst the noise of the streams of Duvranna. " Whither art thou gone in thy beauty, dark-haired daughter of Nuäth? Lathmon is in the field of the valiant, but thou didst promise to remain in the hall; thou didst promise to remain in the hall till the son of Morni returned. Till he returned from Strumon, to the maid of his love! the tear was on thy cheek at his departure; the sigh rose in secret in thy breast. But thou dost not come forth with songs, with the lightly-trembling sound of the harp!"

Such were the words of Gaul, when he came to Dunlathmon's towers. The gates were open and dark. The winds were blustering in the hall³. The trees strowed the threshold with leaves; the murmur of night was abroad. Sad

Or, if your influence be quite damm'd up
By *black* usurping *mists*, some gentle taper,
Though a rush candle from the wicker hole
Of some clay habitation, visit us
With thy *long-levelled rule of streaming light*.

3 *The winds were blustering in the hall.*] MACPHERSON'S
Night-piece.

With every blast the fragments fall,
And *winds* are *blustering* in the *hall*.

and silent, at a rock, the son of Morni sat : his soul trembled for the maid ; but he knew not whither to turn his course ! The son of Leth stood at a distance, and heard the winds in his bushy hair. But he did not raise his voice, for he saw the sorrow of Gaul !

Sleep descended on the chiefs. The visions of night arose. Oithona stood, in a dream, before the eyes of Morni's son. Her hair was loose and disordered : her lovely eye rolled deep in tears. Blood stained her snowy arm. The robe half hid the wound in her breast. She stood over the chief, and her voice was feebly heard. "Sleeps the son of Morni, he that was lovely in the eyes of Oithona ? Sleeps Gaul at the distant rock, and the daughter of Nuäth low ? The sea rolls round the dark isle of Tromathon. I sit in my tears in the cave ! Nor do I sit alone, O Gaul, the dark chief of Cuthal is there. He is there in the rage of his love. What can Oithona do ?"

A rougher blast rushed through the oak. The dream of night departed. Gaul took his aspen spear. He stood in the rage of his soul. Often did his eyes turn to the east. He accused

the lagging light. At length the morning came forth. The hero lifted up the sail. The winds came rustling from the hill ; he bounded on the waves of the deep. On the third day arose Tromathon, like a blue shield in the midst of the sea ⁴. The white wave roared against its rocks ; sad Oithona sat on the coast ! She looked on the rolling waters, and her tears came down. But when she saw Gaul in his arms, she started and turned her eyes away. Her lovely cheek is bent and red ; her white arm trembles by her side. Thrice she strove to fly from his presence ; thrice her steps failed her as she went !

“ Daughter of Nuäth,” said the hero, “ why dost thou fly from Gaul. Do my eyes send forth the flame of death ? Darkens hatred in my soul ? Thou art to me the beam of the east, rising in a

⁴ *On the third day arose Tromathon, like a blue shield in the midst of the sea.*] *Odyssey*, v. 279. Quoted by Macpherson.

’ΟΚΤΩΚΑΙΔΕΚΑΘΗ δ’ ἐφάνη ὄρεα σκιόεντα

Γαίης Φαιήκων, ὅθι τ’ ἄγχιστον πῖλεν αὐτῶ·

Εἶσατο δ’, ὡς ὅτε ΠΙΝΟΝ ἐν ΗΡΟΕΙΔΕΙ ΠΟΝΤΩ.

Then swelled to sight Phæacia’s dusky coast,
And woody mountains half in vapours lost ;
That lay before him indistinct and vast,
Like a broad shield amidst the watry waste.

POPE.

land unknown. But thou coverest thy face with sadness, daughter of car-borne Nuäth ! Is the foe of Oithona near ? My soul burns to meet him in fight. The sword trembles by the side of Gaul, and longs to glitter in his hand. Speak, daughter of Nuäth, dost thou not behold my tears !”

“ Young chief of Strumon,” replied the maid, “ why comest thou over the dark-blue wave, to Nuäth’s mournful daughter ? Why did I not pass away in secret, like the flower of the rock, that lifts its fair head unseen, and strows its withered leaves on the blast ⁵ ? Why didst thou come, O

⁵ *Why did I not pass away in secret like the flower of the rock, that lifts its fair head unseen, and strows its withered leaves on the blast.*] As the *flower* of the *field*, so he flourisheth, for the *wind* passeth over it, and it is gone. *Psalms*, ciii. 15. *Supra*, *Lathmon*, ⁸.

“ In *secret* like the *flower*,” &c. CATULLUS.

Ut *flos* in septis *secretus* nascitur hortis.

“ That lifts its fair head *unseen*, and *strows* its *withered leaves* on the *blast*.” GRAY’S *Elegy*.

Full many a flower is born to blush *unseen*,

And waste its *sweetness* in the *desert air*.

which Gray again adopted from THOMSON’S *Autumn* ;

As in the hollow breast of Appenine,

Beneath the shelter of encircling hills,

A myrtle rises, far from human eye,

Gaul, to hear my departing sigh? I vanish in my youth; my name shall not be heard. Or it will be heard with grief; the tears of Nuäth must fall. Thou wilt be sad, son of Morni, for the departed fame of Oithona. But she shall sleep in the narrow tomb, far from the voice of the mourner. Why didst thou come, chief of Strumon, to the sea-beat rocks of Tromathon?"

"I came to meet thy foes, daughter of car-borne Nuäth! the death of Cuthal's chief darkens before me; or Morni's son shall fall! Oithona! when Gaul is low, raise my tomb on that oozy rock. When the dark-bounding ship shall pass, call the sons of the sea! call them, and give this sword, to bear it hence to Morni's hall. The grey-haired chief will then cease to look towards the desert, for the return of his son!"

"Shall the daughter of Nuäth live?" she replied with a bursting sigh. "Shall I live in

*And breathes its balmy fragrance o'er the wild;
So flourished, blooming, and unseen by all,
The sweet Lavinia.*

But the beauties of the Psalmist, Catullus, and Gray, combined in a single simile of Macpherson's Ossian, prove that the author was not less diligent in imitation, than successful in his plagiarisms.

Tromathon, and the son of Morni low? My heart is not of that rock; nor my soul careless as that sea; which lifts its blue waves to every wind, and rolls beneath the storm⁶! The blast which shall lay thee low, shall spread the branches of Oithona on earth. We shall wither together, son of car-borne Morni! The narrow

⁶ *Nor my soul careless as that sea; which lifts its blue waves to every wind, and rolls beneath the storm.*] A variation of Homer. *Iliad*, xiv. 16.

Ὡς δ' ἔτε ΠΟΡΦΥΡΗ ΠΕΛΑΓΟΣ μέγα ΚΥΜΑΤΙ κωφῶ,
 Οσσόμενον ΛΙΤΕΩΝ ΑΝΕΜΩΝ λαίψηρά, κέλευθα,
 Αὐτως, οὐδ' ἄρα τε ΠΡΟΚΥΤΑΙΝΔΕΤΑΙ ΟΥΔΕΤΕΡΩΣΕ,
 Πρὶν τινα κεκρίμενον καταβήμεναι ἐκ Διὸς οὐρον.
 Ὡς ὁ γέρον ὠρύμανε, ΔΑΙΖΟΜΕΝΟΣ κατὰ ΘΥΜΟΝ
 ΔΙΧΘΑΔΙ.

As when old *ocean's* silent surface sleeps,
 The *waves* just *heaving* on the *purple* deeps:—
 The mass of waters will *no* wind obey;
 Jove sends one gust, and bids them *roll away*.
 While wav'ring councils thus his *mind* engage,
 Fluctuates in *doubtful* thought the Pylia sage.

POPE.

“As when the vast ocean—prescient of the coming *storm*; the rapid course of the whistling *winds*: Dark it *heaves* along its bounds; and knows not *whither* to *roll* its *waves*: Before some *wind* confirmed descends.—Thus *doubtful* in *soul* was the aged.”
 MACPHERSON'S *Homer*, ii. 47. “Nor my *soul* *careless* as that *sea*, which *lifts* its *blue waves* to every *wind*, and *rolls* beneath the *storm*.”

house is pleasant to me, and the grey stone of the dead : for never more will I leave thy rocks, O sea-surrounded Tromathon ! Night came on with her clouds, after the departure of Lathmon, when he went to the wars of his fathers, to the moss-covered rock of Duthormoth. Night came on. I sat in the hall, at the beam of the oak ! The wind was abroad in the trees. I heard the sound of arms. Joy rose in my face. I thought of thy return. It was the chief of Cuthal, the red-haired strength of Dunrommath. His eyes rolled in fire : the blood of my people was on his sword. They who defended Oithona fell by the gloomy chief ! What could I do ? My arm was weak. I could not lift the spear. He took me in my grief, amidst my tears he raised the sail. He feared the returning Lathmon, the brother of unhappy Oithona ! But behold he comes with his people ! the dark wave is divided before him ! Whither wilt thou turn thy steps, son of Morni ? Many are the warriors of thy foe !”

“ My steps never turned from battle,” Gaul said and unsheathed his sword. “ Shall I then begin to fear, Oithona, when thy foes are near ? Go to thy cave, my love, till our battle cease on

the field. Son of Leth, bring the bows of our fathers ! the sounding quiver of Morni ! Let our three warriors bend the yew. Ourselves will lift the spear. They are an host on the rock ! our souls are strong in war !”

Oithona went to the cave. A troubled joy rose on her mind, like the red path of lightning on a stormy cloud ! Her soul was resolved ; the tear was dried from her wildly-looking eye. Dunrommath slowly approached. He saw the son of Morni. Contempt contracted his face, a smile is on his dark-brown cheek ; his red eye rolled, half-concealed, beneath his shaggy brows !

“ Whence are the sons of the sea,” begun the gloomy chief ? “ Have the winds driven you on the rocks of Tromathon ? Or come you in search of the white-handed maid ? The sons of the unhappy, ye feeble men, come to the hand of Dunrommath ⁷ ! His eye spares not the weak ;

⁷ Whence are the sons of the sea, &c.—*The sons of the unhappy, ye feeble men, come to the hand of Dunrommath.*] *Iliad*, xxi. 150.

Τίς, ΠΟΘΕΝ εἰς ΑΝΔΡΩΝ, ὃ μὲν ἔτλης ἀντίος ἐλθεῖν ;
ΔΥΣΤΗΝΩΝ δέ τε ΠΑΙΔΕΣ ΕΜΩ ΜΕΝΕΙ ἀντιώσσι.

he delights in the blood of strangers⁸. Oithona is a beam of light, and the chief of Cuthal enjoys it in secret; wouldst thou come on its loveliness, like a cloud, son of the feeble hand! Thou mayst come, but shalt thou return to the halls of thy fathers?" "Dost thou not know me," said Gaul, "red-haired chief of Cuthal? Thy feet were swift on the heath⁹, in the battle of car-borne Lathmon; when the sword of Mor-ni's son pursued his host, in Morven's woody land. Dunrommath! thy words are mighty, for thy warriors gather behind thee. But do I fear them, son of pride? I am not of the race of the feeble!"

What art thou, *boldest* of the race of *man*?
Who, or from *whence*? *unhappy* is the *sire*,
 Whose *son* encounters our resistless ire.

POPE.

⁸ *His eye spares not the weak; he delights in the blood of strangers.*] Their *eye* shall not *spare* children. Isaiah, xiii. 18. Let not your *eyes spare*, neither have ye pity:—And as for me also, mine *eye* shall not *spare*, neither will I have pity. Ezek. ix. 5. 10. He *delights* not in the blood of *bullocks*. Is. i. 11.

⁹ *Dost thou not know me, said Gaul.—Thy feet were swift on the heath, &c.*] Par. Lost, iv. 827.

Know ye not then, said Satan fill'd with scorn,
Know ye not me? ye knew me once, no mate
For you, there sitting where you durst not soar:

Gaul advanced in his arms; Dunrommath shrunk behind his people. But the spear of Gaul pierced the gloomy chief; his sword lopped off his head, as it bended in death. The son of Morni shook it thrice by the lock; the warriors of Dunrommath fled. The arrows of Morven pursued them: ten fell on the mossy rocks. The rest lift the sounding sail, and bound on the troubled deep. Gaul advanced towards the cave of Oithona. He beheld a youth leaning on a rock. An arrow had pierced his side; his eye rolled faintly beneath his helmet. The soul of Morni's son was sad, he came and spoke the words of peace.

“Can the hand of Gaul heal thee, youth of the mournful brow? I have searched for the herbs of the mountains; I have gathered them on the secret banks of their streams¹⁰. My hand has closed the wound of the brave, their eyes have blessed the son of Morni. Where dwelt thy fathers, warrior? Were they of the

¹⁰ *I have searched for the herbs of the mountains; I have gathered them on the banks of their secret streams.*] The hay appeareth, and the tender grass sheweth itself, and *herbs* of the mountains are gathered. Prov. xxviii. 25.

sons of the mighty ? Sadness shall come, like night, on thy native streams. Thou art fallen in thy youth !”

“ My fathers,” replied the stranger, “ were of the race of the mighty ; but they shall not be sad ; for my fame is departed like morning mist. High walls rise on the banks of Duvranna ; and see their mossy towers in the stream ; a rock ascends behind them with its bending pines. Thou mayst behold it far distant. There my brother dwells. He is renowned in battle : give him this glittering helm.”

The helmet fell from the hand of Gaul. It was the wounded Oithona ! She had armed herself in the cave, and came in search of death. Her heavy eyes are half closed ; the blood pours from her heaving side. “ Son of Morni,” she said, “ prepare the narrow tomb. Sleep grows, like darkness, on my soul. The eyes of Oithona are dim ! O had I dwelt at Duvranna, in the bright beam of my fame ! then had my years come on with joy ; the virgins would then bless my steps. But I fall in youth, son of Morni ; my father shall blush in his hall !”

She fell pale on the rock of Tromathon. The mournful warrior raised her tomb. He came to Morven ; we saw the darkness of his soul. Ossian took the harp in the praise of Oithona. The brightness of the face of Gaul returned. But his sigh rose, at times, in the midst of his friends ; like blasts that shake their unfrequent wings, after the stormy winds are laid !

C R O M A :

A POEM.

ARGUMENT.

MALVINA, the daughter of Toscar, is overheard by Ossian lamenting the death of Oscar her lover. Ossian, to divert her grief, relates his own actions in an expedition which he undertook, at Fingal's command, to aid Crothar, the petty king of Croma, a country in Ireland, against Rothmar, who invaded his dominions. The story is delivered down thus in tradition. Crothar, king of Croma, being blind with age, and his son too young for the field, Rothmar, the chief of Tromlo, resolved to avail himself of the opportunity offered of annexing the dominions of Crothar to his own. He accordingly marched into the country subject to Crothar, but which he held of Arth, or Artho, who was, at the time, supreme king of Ireland.

Crothar being, on account of his age and blindness, unfit for action, sent for aid to Fingal, king of Scotland; who ordered his son Ossian to the relief of Crothar. But before his arrival, Fovargormo, the son of Crothar, attacking Rothmar, was slain himself, and his forces totally defeated. Ossian renewed the war; came to battle, killed Rothmar, and routed his army. Croma being thus delivered of its enemies, Ossian returned to Scotland. **MACPHERSON.**

C R O M A :

A POEM.

“IT was the voice of my love¹! seldom art thou in the dreams of Malvina²! Open your

¹ *It was the voice of my love.*] *It is the voice of my beloved* that knocketh, saying, open unto me my love, my dove, undefiled. *Song of Solomon*, v. 2.

² *Seldom art thou in the dreams of Malvina.*] In the first editions, “Few are his *visits* to the *dreams* of Malvina.” From THOMSON.

Should then the weary eye of grief,
Beside some sympathetic stream,
In slumber find a short relief,
Oh *visit* thou my soothing *dream*.

The alteration, “Seldom art thou in the dreams of Malvina,”

airy halls, O fathers of Toscar of shields ! Unfold the gates of your clouds ³ : the steps of Mal-

which is faithfully preserved in the Earse version, was introduced, perhaps, because in that language there was no correspondent expression for a visit. The Earse version was first printed in SHAW's *Galic Analysis or Grammar*, from a copy communicated to a lord of Session, (Lord Kaims, I suppose,) by Macpherson himself. It is literally from the English, with the alteration of a few passages, for which no equivalent phrases could be found in Earse. But, by a mutual adaptation, the improved edition of 1773, and the Earse version, exactly coincide.

³ Open *your airy halls*---Unfold *the gates of your clouds*.]
Iliad, viii. 393.

Αὐτόμαται δὲ ΠΥΛΑΙ ΜΥΚΟΝ οὐρανοῦ, ἃς ἔχον ὦραι,
Τῆς ἐπιτέτραπται μέγας οὐρανός, Οὐλυμπός τε
Ἥμιν ΑΝΑΚΛΙΝΑΙ ΠΥΚΙΝΟΝ ΝΕΦΟΣ, ἣδ' ἐπιθεῖναι.

Heaven's *gates* spontaneous *open* to the powers,
Heaven's golden gates, kept by the winged hours ;
Commision'd in alternate watch they stand,
The sun's bright portals and the skies command ;
Close, or *unfold*, th' eternal *gates* of day,
Bar heaven with *clouds*, or roll those *clouds* away.
The sounding hinges ring, the *clouds* divide.

POPE.

“The *gates* of heaven harsh-grating aloft, *open* wide of their own accord. The gates which the Seasons keep : To whom broad Olympus is delivered in charge : To *open* the gathered *cloud*.” MACPHERSON'S *Homer*, i. 237. The airy halls of Fingal, with their gates of clouds, are thus, though apparently original, a literal transcript of the residence of the gods upon mount Olympus, whose eternal gates are barricaded with clouds.

vina are near⁴. I have heard a voice in my dream. I feel the fluttering of my soul. Why didst thou come, O blast, from the dark-rolling face of the lake? Thy rustling wing was in the tree⁵; the dream of Malvina fled. But she beheld her love, when his robe of mist flew on the wind. A sun-beam was on his skirts, they glittered like the gold of the stranger⁶. It was

⁴ *The steps of Malvina are near.*] In the first editions, "The steps of Malvina's *departure* are near," from, "The time of my *departure* is at hand." 2 Tim. iv. 6. Departure was probably omitted, in the improved edition, to adapt it to the Earse, "*Tha ceuma Mhalmhine gu dian*;" as in that language there is no such metaphorical expression as departure, for death.

⁵ *Thy rustling wing was on the tree.*] Par. Lost, i. 768.

Brush'd with the hiss of *rustling wings*;
of which the Earse version, "Bha do sgiath fhuaimneach," is a literal translation.

⁶ *A sun-beam was on his skirts; they glittered like the gold of the stranger.*] Par. Lost, v. 277.

Six wings he wore, to shade
His lineaments divine; the pair that clad
Each shoulder broad, came *mantling* o'er his breast
With *regal ornament*; the middle pair
Girt like a starry zone his waste, and round
' *Skirted* his loins and thighs with *downy gold*.

And the Earse version of the preceding sentence, "His robe of mist flew on the wind," "Sa ceo earradh ag *taomadh* ma cliabh," his misty array (regal ornament) *poured* (mantling) o'er his

the voice of my love ! seldom comes he to my dreams !”

“ But thou dwellest in the soul of Malvina, son of mighty Ossian ! My sighs arise with the beam of the east ; my tears descend with the drops of night ⁷. I was a lovely tree, in thy presence, Oscar, with all my branches round me ; but thy death came like a blast from the desert, and laid my green head low ⁸. The spring re-

breast, preserves the original, to which the translator was afraid to adhere in English.

⁷ *My sighs arise with the beam of the east ; my tears descend with the drops of night.*] It is the voice of my beloved, &c.—for my head is filled with dew, and my locks *with the drops of night*. Solomon’s Song, v. 2.

⁸ *I was a lovely tree in thy presence, Oscar, with all my branches round me ; but thy death came like a blast from the desert, and laid my green head low.*] Homer’s simile of the young olive, repeated from Darthula. POPE’S *Iliad*, xvii. 57.

As the young olive, in some sylvan scene,
Crowned by fresh fountains with eternal *green*,
Lifts the gay *head*, in snowy flow’rets fair,
And plays and dances in the gentle air ;
When lo ! a *whirlwind* from high heaven invades
The tender plant, and withers all its shades ;
It *lies up-rooted* from its genial bed,
A *lovely* ruin now defaced and *dead*.

“ White with blossoms its lofty *head*.—But sudden-rushing from heaven comes—the darkening *whirlwind* and *lays it low*.—Across

turned with its showers ; no leaf of mine arose !
 The virgins saw me silent in the hall ; they
 touched the harp of joy. The tear was on the
 cheek of Malvina : the virgins beheld me in my
 grief. Why art thou sad, they said, thou first
 of the maids of Lutha ? Was he lovely as the
 beam of the morning, and stately in thy sight ?”

Pleasant is thy song in Ossian's ear, daughter
 of streamy Lutha ! Thou hast heard the music
 of departed bards, in the dream of thy rest, when
 sleep fell on thine eyes, at the murmur of Mo-
 ruth. When thou didst return from the chace,
 in the day of the sun, thou hast heard the music
 of bards, and thy song is lovely ! It is lovely,
 O Malvina, but it melts the soul. There is a
 joy in grief when peace dwells in the breast of
 the sad. But sorrow wastes the mournful ⁹, O

the ditch it lies along : Spreading *all* its fair *branches* on earth.”
 MACPHERSON'S *Homer*, ii. 167.

⁹ There is a joy in grief *when peace dwells in the breast of the*
 sad. *But sorrow wastes the mournful.*] MASON'S *Elfrida*.

There oft is found an avarice in grief,
And the wan eye of sorrow loves to gaze
Upon its secret horde of treasured woes
In pining solitude. Perhaps thy mind
Takes the same pensive cast.

daughter of Toscar, and their days are few !
They fall away, like the flower on which the
sun hath looked in his strength after the mil-
dew has passed over it, when its head is heavy
with the drops of night¹⁰. Attend to the tale

An *avarice*, converted into a *joy*, in grief, from Pope's *melan-
choly joy* ; the translation of ολοοῖο τεταρπωμεσθα γοοιο in Homer.

¹⁰ They fall away like the flower—when its head is heavy with
the drops of night.] Iliad, viii. 306.

ΜΗΚΩΝ δ' ὥς ἐτέρωσε ΚΑΡΗ ΒΑΛΕΝ, ἥτ' ἐνὶ κήπῳ

Καρπῷ ΒΡΗΘΟΜΕΝΗ, ΝΟΤΙΗΣΙ ΤΕ 'ΕΙΑΡΙΝΗΣΙΝ.

Æneid, ix. 435.

Purpureus veluti cum *flos*, succisus aratro

Languescit moriens ; lassove papavera collo

Demisere caput, *pluvia* quum forte *gravantur*.

Highlander, vi. 115.

Thus in the vale the *poppy's* blushing head,

Brimful of summer showers, to earth is weighed.

And in Macpherson's earliest poem, entitled *Death*.

Thus in a valley a sweet smelling flower

Exults, the blooming daughter of the spring,

Till, blasted by the breath of north, it bows,

Droops, withers, dies, pressed in the jaws of death.

But the adventitious imagery, " The flower on which the *sun*
hath looked in his strength, after the *mildew* (*milcheo* in Earse)
hath passed over it, when its head is heavy with the drops of
night," is almost entirely scriptural.—Look not upon me be-
cause I am black ; because the *sun* hath looked upon me. *So-*
lomon's Song, i. 6. As the sun shineth in his strength, Rev.
i. 16. As the flower of the field so he flourisheth ; for the
wind passeth over it and it is gone. *Psalms*, ciii. 15. My

of Ossian, O maid. He remembers the days of his youth !

The king commanded ; I raised my sails, and rushed into the bay of Croma ; into Croma's sounding bay in lovely Inisfail. High on the coast arose the towers of Crothar king of spears ; Crothar renowned in the battles of his youth ; but age dwelt then around the chief. Rothmar had raised the sword against the hero ; and the wrath of Fingal burned. He sent O'ssian to meet Rothmar in war, for the chief of Croma was the friend of his youth. I sent the bard before me with songs. I came into the hall of Crothar. There sat the chief amidst the arms of his fathers, but his eyes had failed. His grey locks waved around a staff, on which the warrior leaned¹¹. He hummed the song of other

head is filled with dew, and my locks with the *drops of night*. Solomon's Song, v. 2.

And waving harvests hang the *heavy* head. *Autumn*.

¹¹ *His* grey locks *waved* around a staff, on *which* the warrior *leaned*.] Young's shepherd, *leaning on his staff*, (Calthon and Colmal, ².) which the translator has imitated in his early poem upon *Death*.

The *hoary* age
Of old Philanthus mourns, a *staff* supports
His tottering feet, he droops his *silvered* head.

times, when the sound of our arms reached his ears. Crothar rose, stretched his aged hand and blessed the son of Fingal.

“Ossian !” said the hero, “the strength of Crothar’s arm has failed. O could I lift the sword, as on the day that Fingal fought at Strutha ! He was the first of men ! but Crothar had also his fame. The king of Morven praised me ; he placed on my arm the bossy shield of Calthar, whom the king had slain in his wars. Dost thou not behold it on the wall, for Crothar’s eyes have failed ? Is thy strength, like thy father’s, Ossian ? let the aged feel thine arm ¹² !”

I gave my arm to the king ; he felt it with his aged hands ¹³. The sigh rose in his breast, and his tears came down. “Thou art strong, my son,” he said, “but not like the king of

¹² *Is thy strength like thy father’s, Ossian ? let the aged feel thine arm.*] And Isaac said unto Jacob, come near, I pray thee, that I may *feel thee*, my son, whether thou be my very son Esau or not. *Gen.* xxvii. 21.

¹³ *I gave my arm to the king ; he felt it with his aged hands.*] And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father, and he *felt him*, and said, The voice is Jacob’s voice, but the *hands* are the hands of Esau. *Id.* 22. “Thou art strong, my son, he said, but not like the king of Morven.”

Morven ! But who is like the hero among the mighty in war ! Let the feast of my hall be spread ; and let my bards exalt the song. Great is he that is within my walls, ye sons of echoing Croma !” The feast is spread. The harp is heard ; and joy is in the hall. But it was joy covering a sigh, that darkly dwelt in every breast. It was like a faint beam of the moon spread on a cloud in heaven. At length the music ceased, and the aged king of Croma spoke ; he spoke without a tear, but sorrow swelled in the midst of his voice.

“Son of Fingal ! beholdest thou not the darkness of Crothar’s joy ? My soul was not sad at the feast, when the people lived before me. I rejoiced in the presence of strangers, when my son shone in the hall. But, Ossian, he is a beam that is departed ¹⁴. He left no streak of light

¹⁴ *When my son shone in the hall. But, Ossian, he is a beam that is departed.*] Macpherson’s verses on the death of a young lady.

A ray to light a father’s eye she shone,
And heal’d the loss of many a buried son ;
But soon invading darkness chaced away
The beauteous setting of a glorious day.

“ And left no streak of light behind.”

behind. He is fallen, son of Fingal, in the wars of his father. Rothmar, the chief of grassy Tromlo, heard that these eyes had failed; he heard that my arms were fixed in the hall, and the pride of his soul arose! He came towards Croma; my people fell before him. I took my arms in my wrath, but what could sightless Crothar do? My steps were unequal; my grief was great. I wished for the days that were past. Days wherein I fought; and won in the field of blood. My son returned from the chace; the fair-haired Fovar-gormo. He had not lifted his sword in battle, for his arm was young. But the soul of the youth was great; the fire of valour burnt in his eyes. He saw the disordered steps of his father, and his sighs arose. "King of Croma," he said, "is it because thou hast no son; is it for the weakness of Fovar-gormo's arm that thy sighs arise? I begin, my father, to feel my strength; I have drawn the sword of my youth; and I have bent the bow. Let me meet this Rothmar, with the sons of Croma: let me meet him, O my father; I feel my burning soul!" And thou shalt meet him, I said, son of the sightless Crothar! But let others advance be-

fore thee, that I may hear the tread of thy feet at thy return ; for my eyes behold thee not, fair-haired Fovar-gormo ! He went, he met the foe ; he fell. Rothmar advances to Croma. He who slew my son is near, with all his pointed spears."

This is no time to fill the shell, I replied, and took my spear ! My people saw the fire of my eyes ; they all arose around. Through night we strode along the heath. Grey morning rose in the east. A green narrow vale appeared before us ; nor wanting was its winding stream. The dark host of Rothmar are on its banks, with all their glittering arms. We fought along the vale. They fled. Rothmar sunk beneath my sword ! Day had not descended in the west, when I brought his arms to Crothar. The aged hero felt them with his hands ; and joy brightened over all his thoughts.

The people gather to the hall. The shells of the feast are heard. Ten harps are strung ; five bards advance, and sing, by turns ¹⁵, the praise

¹⁵ *Five bards advance and sing by turns.*] The SIX BARDS, hitherto annexed to this passage as a note, was evidently intended for an episode or interlude in Croma, where the five

of Ossian; they poured forth their burning souls, and the string answered to their voice. The joy of Croma was great: for peace returned to the land. The night came on with silence; the morning returned with joy. No foe came in darkness, with his glittering spear. The joy of Croma was great; for the gloomy Rothmar had fallen !

I raised my voice for Fovar-gormo, when they laid the chief in earth. The aged Crothar was there, but his sigh was not heard. He searched for the wound of his son, and found it in his breast. Joy rose in the face of the aged. He came and spoke to Ossian. “ King of spears !” he said, “ my son has not fallen without his fame. The young warrior did not fly ; but met death, as he went forward in his strength. Happy are they who die in youth, when their re-

bards advance and sing by turns the praise of Ossian ; the chieftain, or sixth bard, who raises his voice for Fovar-gormo, or whose song would have concluded the night, and have introduced the morning with joy. But the Six Bards was kept distinct, as a specimen of “ poetry a thousand years later than Ossian,” in which the modern imagery was certainly too valuable to have been suppressed or altered. We shall reserve it, therefore, for the concluding Fragment in the second volume.

noun is heard ! The feeble will not behold them in the hall ; or smile at their trembling hands. Their memory shall be honoured in song ; the young tear of the virgin will fall. But the aged wither away, by degrees ; the fame of their youth, while they yet live, is all forgot. They fall in secret. The sigh of their son is not heard. Joy is around their tomb ; the stone of their fame is placed without a tear. Happy are they who die in youth, when their renown is around them ¹⁶.

¹⁶ Happy are they who die in youth, while their renown is around them.] POPE'S *Odyssey*, v. 394.

*Happy, thrice happy, who, in battle slain,
Pressed in Atrides' cause the Trojan plain !
Oh ! had I died before that well-fought wall ;
Had some distinguished day renowned my fall !*

BERRATHON:

A POEM.

ARGUMENT.

FINGAL in his voyage to Lochlin, whither he had been invited by Starno, the father of Agandecca, touched at Berrathon, an island of Scandinavia, where he was kindly entertained by Larthmor, the petty king of the place, who was a vassal of the supreme kings of Lochlin. The hospitality of Larthmor gained him Fingal's friendship, which that hero manifested, after the imprisonment of Larthmor by his own son, by sending Ossian and Toscar, the father of Malvina, so often mentioned, to rescue Larthmor, and to punish the unnatural behaviour of Uthal. Uthal was handsome, and, by the ladies, much admired. Nina-thoma, the beautiful daughter of Tor-thoma, a neighbouring prince, fell in love and fled with him. He proved inconstant; for another lady, whose name is not mentioned, gaining his affections, he confined Nina-thoma to a desert island near the coast of Berrathon. She was relieved by Ossian, who, in company with Toscar, landing on Berrathon, defeated the forces of Uthal, and killed him in a single combat. Nina-thoma, whose love not all the bad behaviour of Uthal could erase, hearing of his death, died of grief. In the mean time Larthmor is restored, and Ossian and Toscar return in triumph to Fingal.

The poem opens with an elegy on the death of Malvina the daughter of Toscar, and closes with presages of Ossian's death. MACPHERSON.

BERRATHON :

A POEM.

BEND thy blue course, O stream, round the narrow plain of Lutha. Let the green woods hang over it, from their hills: the sun look on it at noon. The thistle is there on its rock, and shakes its beard to the wind. The flower hangs its heavy head, waving, at times, to the gale¹.

¹ *The sun look on it at noon.---The flower hangs its heavy head, waving, at times, to the gale.] Croma, 10. From THOMSON'S Autumn.*

Attempered *suns* arise,
Sweet beamed, and shedding oft through lucid clouds
A pleasing calm, while broad and brown below
Extensive harvests *hang* the heavy head ;

“Why dost thou awake me, O gale,” it seems to say, “I am covered with the drops of heaven²? The time of my fading is near³, the blast that shall scatter my leaves. To-morrow shall the traveller come; he that saw me in my beauty shall come. His eyes will search the field, but they will not find me⁴?” So shall they search

Rich, silent, deep, they stand; for not a *gale*

Rolls in light *billows* o’er the *bending plain*.

“*Bend thy blue course, O stream! round the narrow plain of Lutha.*” Such coincidence of epithets is no more fortuitous than the concourse of atoms. Macpherson having refreshed his mind with the perusal of a favourite passage in Thomson, the epithets which he had imbibed were transfused insensibly into his own composition.

² *Why dost thou awake me, O gale, it seems to say, I am covered with the drops of heaven.*] From *Solomon’s Song*. I sleep, but my heart *waketh*---for my head is filled with dew, and my locks *with the drops of night*. v. 2. And from POPE’S *Eloisa*.

Come, sister, come, it said, or *seemed to say*.

But I am afraid that this *seeming* apostrophe of the flower to the gale, is more sentimental than truly antique.

³ *The time of my fading is near.*] *The time of my departure is at hand.* 2 Tim. iv. 6. The arts of concealed imitation are observable: “*The steps of my departure,*” in *Crona*: “*The time of my fading,*” in *Berrathon*.

⁴ *His eyes will search the field, but they will not find me.*] They shall *seek* me early, but *they shall not find me*. Prov. i. 28. For now shall I sleep in the dust, and thou *shalt seek me* in the morning, but *I shall not be*. Job, vii. 21. “So shall

in vain, for the voice of Cona, after it has failed in the field. The hunter shall come forth in the morning; and the voice of my harp shall not be heard. "Where is the son of car-borne Fingal?" The tear will be on his cheek! Then come thou, O Malvina, with all thy music, come. Lay Ossian in the plain of Lutha: let his tomb rise in the lovely field.

Malvina! where art thou, with thy songs, with the soft sound of thy steps? Son of Alpin, art thou near? where is the daughter of Toscar? "I passed, O son of Fingal, by Tor-lutha's mossy walls. The smoke of the hall was ceased. Silence was among the trees of the hill. The voice of the chace was over. I saw the daughters of the bow. I asked about Malvina, but they answered not. They turned their faces away: thin darkness covered their beauty. They

they search in vain, for the voice of Cona, after it has failed in the field. The hunter shall come forth in the morning," &c. The traveller returning in search of the flower, and the hunter in quest of the voice of Cona, are repetitions from Dar-thula, where the man, who in Homer rears a young olive in a lonely place, is happily converted into the traveller who beholds three lonely trees on the hill.

were like stars, on a rainy hill, by night, each looking faintly through the mist."

Pleasant be thy rest, O lovely beam ! soon hast thou set on our hills ! The steps of thy departure were stately, like the moon on the blue, trembling wave. But thou hast left us in darkness, first of the maids of Lutha ! We sit, at the rock, and there is no voice ; no light but the meteor of fire ! Soon hast thou set, O Malvina, daughter of generous Toscar ! But thou risest like the beam of the east, among the spirits of thy friends, where they sit, in their stormy halls, the chambers of the thunder ⁵ ! A cloud hovers over Cona. Its blue curling sides are high. The winds are beneath it, with their wings. Within it is the dwelling of Fingal ⁶. There

⁵ *Where they sit, in their stormy halls, the chambers of the thunder.*] THOMSON'S *Winter*.

And now impetuous shoot
 Into the secret *chambers* of the deep,
 The wint'ry Baltic *thundering* o'er their head.
 From the chambers of the south, in *Job*, ix. 9.

⁶ A cloud *hovers over Cona*. Its blue curling sides are high. ---Within it is the dwelling of *Fingal*.] The dwelling of Fingal, and the apotheosis of Malvina, are transcribed from the *Hunter*, with little alteration.

*A hill there is, whose sloping sides of green
 Are by the raptured eye at distance seen—*

the hero sits in darkness. His airy spear is in his hand. His shield half covered with clouds, is like the darkened moon; when one half still remains in the wave, and the other looks sickly on the field!

His friends sit around the king, on mist! They hear the songs of Ullin: he strikes the half-viewless harp. He raises the feeble voice. The lesser heroes, with a thousand meteors, light the airy hall. Malvina rises, in the midst; a blush is on her cheek. She beholds the unknown faces of her fathers. She turns aside her humid eyes ⁷. “Art thou come so soon?” said Fingal, “daughter of generous Toscar. Sadness

*Within the king of fairies makes abode,
And waves o'er prostrate crowds his regal rod——
Upon the wall, supply the want of day,
Arranged lamps that dart a glimmering ray.*

Or, “The lesser heroes, with a thousand meteors, light the airy hall.”

⁷ *Malvina rises in the midst; a blush is on her cheek.---She turns aside her humid eyes.] Id.*

While clad in woe the lovely Xanthe comes,
And lightens with her charms the shady rooms;
All start, the monarch tumbles from his throne,
Why weeps my daughter, why that tender moan?
Why, why! that sigh, my dear, the parent cries,
What sorrow veils thy beauty sparkling eyes.

dwells in the halls of Lutha. My aged son is sad ! I hear the breeze of Cona, that was wont to lift thy heavy locks. It comes to the hall, but thou art not there. Its voice is mournful among the arms of thy fathers ! Go, with thy rustling wing, O breeze ! sigh on Malvina's tomb. It rises yonder beneath the rock, at the blue stream of Lutha. The maids are departed to their place. Thou alone, O breeze, mournest there !”

But who comes from the dusky west, supported on a cloud ? A smile is on his grey, watry face. His locks of mist fly on wind. He bends forward on his airy spear. It is thy father, Malvina ! “ Why shinest thou, so soon, on our clouds,” he says, “ O lovely light of Lutha ! But thou wert sad, my daughter. Thy friends had passed away. The sons of little men were in the hall. None remained of the heroes, but Ossian, king of spears !”

And dost thou remember Ossian, car-borne Toscar, son of Conloch ? The battles of our youth were many. Our swords went together to the field. They saw us coming like two falling rocks. The sons of the stranger fled. “ There

come the warriors of Cona !” they said. “ Their steps are in the paths of the flying !” Draw near, son of Alpin, to the song of the aged. The deeds of other times are in my soul. My memory beams on the days that are past. On the days of mighty Toscar, when our path was in the deep. Draw near, son of Alpin, to the last sound of the voice of Cona !

The king of Morven commanded. I raised my sails to the wind. Toscar chief of Lutha stood at my side, I rose on the dark-blue wave. Our course was to sea-surrounded Berrathon, the isle of many storms. There dwelt, with his locks of age, the stately strength of Larthmor. Larthmor, who spread the feast of shells to Fingal, when he went to Starno’s halls, in the days of Agandecca. But when the chief was old, the pride of his son arose ; the pride of fair-haired Uthal, the love of a thousand maids. He bound the aged Larthmor, and dwelt in his sounding halls !

Long pined the king in his cave, beside his rolling sea. Day did not come to his dwelling ; nor the burning oak by night. But the wind of ocean was there, and the parting beam of the

moon. The red star looked on the king, when it trembled on the western wave. Snitho came to Selma's hall : Snitho the friend of Larthmor's youth. He told of the king of Berrathon : the wrath of Fingal arose. Thrice he assumed the spear, resolved to stretch his hand to Uthal. But the memory of his deeds rose before the king. He sent his son and Toscar. Our joy was great on the rolling sea. We often half-unsheathed our swords⁸. For never before had we fought alone, on the battles of the spear.

Night came down on the ocean. The winds departed on their wings. Cold and pale is the

⁸ *Our joy was great on the rolling sea. We often half-unsheathed our swords.*] POPE's *Ode on St Cecilia's Day*.

So when the *first* bold vessel dared the seas,
High on the stern the Thracian raised his strain ;——
And men grew heroes at the sound,
Enflamed with glory's charm ;
Each chief his sevenfold shield displayed,
And *half-unsheathed* the shining blade,
To arms, to arms, to arms.

The impatience of young warriors going on their *first expedition*, is well expressed by their *half-drawing* their sword. The modesty of Ossian, in a narration that does him so much honour, is remarkable ; and his humanity to Nina-thoma would grace a hero of our own polished age. MACPHERSON, 1st edit.

moon. The red stars lift their heads on high. Our course is slow along the coast of Berrathon. The white waves tumble on the rocks. "What voice is that," said Toscar, "which comes between the sounds of the waves? It is soft but mournful, like the voice of departed bards. But I behold a maid. She sits on the rock alone. Her head bends on her arm of snow. Her dark hair is in the wind. Hear, son of Fingal, her song, it is smooth as the gliding stream. We came to the silent bay, and heard the maid of night.

"How long will ye roll around me, blue-tumbling waters of ocean? My dwelling was not always in caves, nor beneath the whistling tree. The feast was spread in Torthóma's hall. My father delighted in my voice. The youths beheld me in the steps of my loveliness. They blessed the dark-haired Nina-thoma. It was then thou didst come, O Uthal! like the sun of heaven! the souls of the virgins are thine, son of generous Larthmor! But why dost thou leave me alone, in the midst of roaring waters? Was my soul dark with thy death? Did my white

hand lift the sword ? Why then hast thou left me alone, king of high Finthormo !”

The tear started from my eye, when I heard the voice of the maid. I stood before her in my arms. I spoke the words of peace ! “ Lovely dweller of the cave ! what sigh is in thy breast ? Shall Ossian lift his sword in thy presence, the destruction of thy foes ? Daughter of Torthóma, rise. I have heard the words of thy grief. The race of Morven are around thee, who never injured the weak. Come to our dark-bosomed ship ! thou brighter than that setting moon ! Our course is to the rocky Berrathon, to the echoing walls of Finthormo.” She came in her beauty ; she came with all her lovely steps. Silent joy brightened in her face ; as when the shadows fly from the field of spring⁹ ; the blue stream is rolling in brightness, and the green bush bends over its course !

The morning rose with its beams. We came

⁹ *Silent joy brightened in her face, as when the shadows fly from the field of spring.*] THOMSON'S *Autumn*.

The clouds *fly* different, and the sudden sun,
By fits effulgent, gilds th' *illumin'd field*,
And black by fits the *shadows* sweep along ;
A gaily-chequered heart-expanding scene.

to Rothma's bay. A boar rushed from the wood: my spear pierced his side, and he fell. I rejoiced over the blood. I foresaw my growing fame. But now the sound of Uthal's train came, from the high Finthormo. They spread over the heath to the chace of the boar. Himself comes slowly on, in the pride of his strength. He lifts two pointed spears. On his side is the hero's sword. Three youths carry his polished bows. The bounding of five dogs is before him. His heroes move on, at a distance, admiring the steps of the king. Stately was the son of Larthmor! but his soul was dark! Dark as the troubled face of the moon, when it foretells the storms!

We rose on the heath before the king. He stopt in the midst of his course. His heroes gathered around. A grey-haired bard advanced. "Whence are the sons of the strangers!" began the bard of song. "The children of the unhappy come to Berrathon; to the sword of car-borne Uthal. He spreads no feast in his hall. The blood of strangers is on his streams. If from Selma's walls ye come, from the mossy walls of Fingal, chuse three youths to go to

your king to tell of the fall of his people. Perhaps the hero may come and pour his blood on Uthal's sword. So shall the fame of Finthormo arise, like the growing tree of the vale !”

“ Never will it rise, O bard,” I said in the pride of my wrath. “ He would shrink from the presence of Fingal, whose eyes are the flames of death. The son of Comhal comes, and kings vanish before him. They are rolled together, like mist, by the breath of his rage. Shall three tell to Fingal, that his people fell ? Yes ! they may tell it, bard ! but his people shall fall with fame !”

I stood in the darkness of my strength. Toscar drew his sword at my side. The foe came on like a stream. The mingled sound of death arose. Man took man, shield met shield ; steel mixed its beams with steel. Darts hiss through air. Spears ring on mails. Swords on broken bucklers bound. As the noise of an aged grove beneath the roaring wind, when a thousand ghosts break the trees by night¹⁰, such was the

¹⁰ *As the noise of an aged grove beneath the roaring wind, when a thousand ghosts break the trees by night.*] From the *Earl Marishal's Welcome*.

din of arms. But Uthal fell beneath my sword.
The sons of Berrathon fled. It was then I saw
him in his beauty, and the tear hung in my
eye! "Thou art fallen", young tree," I said,
"with all thy beauty round thee. Thou art
fallen on thy plains, and the field is bare. The

When through an *aged wood*
The thunder *roars* amain,
His path with *oaks* is strewed,
And ruin marks the plain.

And the *Highlander*, iii. 1.

As when beneath the night's tempestuous cloud,
Embattled winds (a thousand ghosts) assail the leafy wood,
Tear on their sable way with awful sound,
And bring the groaning forest to the ground.

But the original of these passages is in POPE's *Iliad*, xvi. 923.

So pent by hills, the *wild winds roar* aloud
In the deep bosom of some gloomy wood;
Leaves, arms, and *trees* aloft in air are blown.

"To mourn over the fall of their enemies, was a practice universal among the Celtic heroes. This is more agreeable to humanity, than the shameful insulting of the dead, so common in Homer, and after him, servilely copied by all his imitators, the humane Virgil not excepted, who have been more successful in borrowing the imperfections of that great poet, than in their imitations of his beauties. MACPHERSON.

The discovery of those imperfections in Homer and in Virgil, is derived from Pope's note on the *Iliad*, xiii. 471. But the purport of this strange amphibology is, that our translator alone, has been equally *successful* in avoiding the *imperfections of that great poet* (Homer), and in the *imitation of his beauties*.

winds come from the desert ! there is no sound in thy leaves ! Lovely art thou in death, son of ear-borne Larthmon."

Nina-thoma sat on the shore. She heard the sound of battle. She turned her red eyes on Lethmal, the grey-haired bard of Selma. He alone had remained on the coast, with the daughter of Torthóma. "Son of the times of old !" she said, "I hear the noise of death. Thy friends have met with Uthal, and the chief is low ! O that I had remained on the rock, inclosed with the tumbling waves ! Then would my soul be sad, but his death would not reach my ear. Art thou fallen on thy heath, O son of high Finthormo ? Thou didst leave me on a rock, but my soul was full of thee. Son of high Finthormo ! art thou fallen on thy heath ?"

She rose pale in her tears. She saw the bloody shield of Uthal. She saw it in Ossian's hand. Her steps were distracted on the heath. She flew. She found him. She fell. Her soul came forth in a sigh. Her hair is spread on her face. My bursting tears descend. A tomb arose on the unhappy. My song of woe was heard. "Rest, hapless children of youth ! Rest at the noise of

that mossy stream ! The virgins will see your tomb, at the chace, and turn away their weeping eyes. Your fame will be in song. The voice of the harp will be heard in your praise. The daughters of Selma shall hear it : your renown shall be in other lands. Rest, children of youth, at the noise of the mossy stream !”

Two days we remained on the coast. The heroes of Berrathon convened. We brought Larthmor to his halls. The feast of shells is spread. The joy of the aged was great. He looked to the arms of his fathers. The arms which he left in his hall, when the pride of Uthal rose. We were renowned before Larthmor. He blessed the chiefs of Morven. He knew not that his son was low, the stately strength of Uthal ! They had told, that he had retired to the woods, with the tears of grief. They had told it, but he was silent in the tomb of Rothma’s heath.

On the fourth day we raised our sails, to the roar of the northern wind. Larthmor came to the coast. His bards exalted the song. The joy of the king was great, he looked to Rothma’s gloomy heath. He saw the tomb of his

son. The memory of Uthal rose. "Who of my heroes," he said, "lies there? he seems to have been of the kings of men. Was he renowned in my halls, before the pride of Uthal rose? Ye are silent, sons of Berrathon! is the king of heroes low? My heart melts for thee, O Uthal! though thy hand was against thy father. O that I had remained in the cave! that my son had dwelt in Finthormo¹²! I might have heard the tread of his feet when he went to the chace of the boar. I might have heard his voice on the blast of my cave. Then would my soul be glad: but now darkness dwells in my halls."

Such were my deeds, son of Alpin, when the arm of my youth was strong. Such the actions of Toscar, the car-borne son of Conloch. But Toscar is on his flying cloud. I am alone at Lutha. My voice is like the last sound of the

¹² *My heart melts for thee, O Uthal!---O that I had remained in the cave! that my son had dwelt in Finthormo!]* O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! *would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!* 2 Sam. xviii. 33. I know of nothing in ancient or modern poetry, sacred or profane, so pathetic as this simple exclamation; compared with which the imitation, "O that I had remained in the cave," is mere burlesque.

wind, when it forsakes the woods ¹³. But Os-
sian shall not be long alone. He sees the mist
that shall receive his ghost. He beholds the
mist that shall form his robe, when he appears
on his hills. The sons of feeble men shall be-
hold me, and admire the stature of the chiefs of
old ¹⁴. They shall creep to their caves. They
shall look to the sky with fear: for my steps
shall be in the clouds. Darkness shall roll on
my side.

Lead, son of Alpin, lead the aged to his woods.
The winds begin to rise. The dark wave of the
lake resounds. Bends there not a tree from Mora
with its branches bare? It bends, son of Alpin,
in the rustling blast. My harp hangs on a blast-
ed branch. The sound of its strings is mourn-
ful. Does the wind touch thee, O harp, or is it
some passing ghost! It is the hand of Malvina!

¹³ *Like the last sound of the wind, when it forsakes the woods.*] A simile of Virgil's reversed. *Æneid*, x. 97.

Ceu flamina prima,

*Cum deprensa fremunt sylvis, et cæca volutant
Murmura.*

¹⁴ *And admire the stature of the chiefs of old.*] *VIRG.
Georg.* i. 497.

Grandiaque effossis mirabitur ossa sepulchris.

Bring me the harp, son of Alpin. Another song shall rise. My soul shall depart in the sound. My fathers shall hear it in their airy hall. Their dim faces shall hang, with joy, from their clouds; and their hands receive their son. The aged oak bends over the stream. It sighs with all its moss. The withered fern whistles near, and mixes, as it waves, with Ossian's hair.

“Strike the harp, and raise the song : be near, with all your wings, ye winds. Bear the mournful sound away to Fingal's airy hall. Bear it to Fingal's hall, that he may hear the voice of his son. The voice of him that praised the mighty !”

“The blast of north opens thy gates, O king. I behold thee sitting on mist, dimly gleaming in all thine arms¹⁵. Thy form now is not the ter-

¹⁵ *I behold thee sitting on mist, dimly gleaming in all thy arms.*] This passage has been happily parodied in the *Probationary Odes* ; “I see thee, O king, sitting on mist, singing in the deep like an oyster.” Had this Probationary Ode been published in a less ironical form, as a fragment of antiquity, it might have obtained the same attestations in the Highlands as the rest of Ossian. A friend of Miss Clara Reeves transmitted a fragment, of his own composition, to a young gentleman then in the Highlands, observing the remains of antiquity there, and making inquiry concerning the authenticity of Ossian's Poems.

ror of the valiant. It is like a watery cloud ; when we see the stars behind it, with their weeping eyes. Thy shield is the aged moon ; thy sword a vapour half-kindled with fire. Dim and feeble is the chief, who travelled in brightness before ! But thy steps are on the winds of the desert. The storms are darkening in thy hand. Thou takest the sun in thy wrath, and hidest him in thy clouds ¹⁶. The sons of little men are afraid. A thousand showers descend. But when thou comest forth in thy mildness, the gale of the morning is near thy course. The sun laughs in his blue fields ¹⁷. The grey stream winds in its vale. The bushes shake their green heads in

He shewed it to different persons in the Highlands, asking them what they thought of it, and they told him that it was one of Ossian's fragments, and that they remembered it perfectly well. *Progress of Romance*, ii. 66.

¹⁶ *Thou takest the sun in thy wrath, and hidest him in thy clouds.*] With clouds he covereth the light. *Job*, xxxvi. 32. And when I shall put thee out, I will cover the heavens, and make the stars thereof dark ; I will cover the sun with a cloud. *Ezek.* xxxii. 7.

¹⁷ *The gale of the morning is near thy course. The sun laughs in his blue fields.*] GRAY'S *Bard*.

Fair laughs the morn, and soft the zephyr blows,
While proudly riding o'er the azure realm.

the wind. The roes bound towards the desert."

"There is a murmur in the heath ! the stormy winds abate ! I hear the voice of Fingal. Long has it been absent from mine ear ! "Come, Ossian, come away," he says¹⁸. "Fingal has received his fame. We passed away, like flames that had shone for a season. Our departure was in renown. Though the plains of our battles are dark and silent ; our fame is in the four grey stones. The voice of Ossian has been heard. The harp has been strung in Selma. "Come, Ossian, come away," he says, "come, fly with thy fathers on clouds." I come, I come, thou king of men ! The life of Ossian fails. I begin

¹⁸ *There is a murmur in the heath ! the stormy winds abate. I hear the voice of Fingal.---Come, Ossian, come away, he says.]*
The whole passage is from POPE's *Eloisa*.

*In each low wind methinks a spirit calls,
And more than echoes talk along the walls ;
Here, as I watched the dying lamps around,
From yonder shrine I heard a hollow sound ;
Come, sister, come, it said, or seemed to say,
Thy place is here, sad sister come away.*

"Come, Ossian, come away, he says, come, fly with thy fathers on clouds."

to vanish on Cona¹⁹. My steps are not seen in Selma. Beside the stone of Mora I shall fall asleep²⁰. The winds whistling in my grey hair, shall not awaken me. Depart on thy wings, O wind : thou canst not disturb the rest of the bard. The night is long, but his eyes are heavy. Depart, thou rustling blast."

"But why art thou sad, son of Fingal? Why grows the cloud of thy soul²¹? The chiefs of

¹⁹ I come, I come, *thou king of men ! The life of Ossian fails. I begin to vanish on Cona, &c.] Id.*

I come, I come ! prepare your roscate bowers,
Celestial palms, and ever blooming flowers ;
Thither, where sinners may have rest, I go,
Where *flames* refined in breasts seraphic glow.

"We passed away like *flames*, that had shone for a season."

²⁰ *Beside the stone of Mora I shall fall asleep.] A substitute for Eloisa's tomb.*

See, in her cell, sad Eloisa spread,
Propt on some *tomb*, a neighbour of the dead.—
But all is calm in this *eternal sleep*,
Here grief forgets to groan, and love to weep.

What follows is a repetition of the *seeming* apostrophe of the flower to the gale. "Why dost thou awaken me, O gale! it seems to say." "The winds whistling in my grey hair, shall not awaken me.—Thou can'st not disturb the rest of the bard."

²¹ *But why art thou sad, son of Fingal? Why grows the cloud of thy soul.] Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me. Psalms xlii. 5. 11. xliii. 5.*

other times are departed. They have gone without their fame. The sons of future years shall pass away. Another race shall arise. The people are like the waves of ocean ²²: like the leaves of woody Morven ²³, they pass away in the rustling

²² *The people are like the waves of ocean.*] HOR. II. *Epist.* ii. 175.

Sic quia perpetuus nulli datur usus, at hæres
Hæredem alterius, velut unda supervenit undam.

Man and for ever? wretch, what wouldst thou have?
Heir urges heir, like *wave* impelling *wave*.

POPE.

²³ *Like the leaves of woody Morven.*] The same thoughts may be found, almost in the same words, in HOMER, vi. 46. Mr Pope falls short of his original; in particular, he has omitted altogether the beautiful image of the wind strewing the withered leaves on the ground. MACPHERSON.

“The chiefs of other years are *departed*.---The sons of future years shall *pass away*. *Another race shall arise*---like the *leaves* of woody Morven, they *pass away* in the rustling *blast*, and *other leaves* lift their *green* heads on high.” *Iliad*, vi. 146.

Οἷη περ φύλλων γενεή, τοιήδε καὶ ἀνδρῶν.

ΦΥΛΛΑ τὰ μὲν τ' ANEMOS χαμάδις χέει, ΑΛΛΑ δὲ θ' ἑλλή

ΤΗΛΕΘΟΝΣΑ ΦΥΕΙ, ἔαρος δ' ἐπινίγνεται ὥξη·

Ὡς ἀνδρῶν γενεή, ἣ μὲν ΦΥΕΙ, ἣ δ' ΑΠΟΛΗΓΕΙ.

Like *leaves* on trees the *race* of man is found,
Now *green* in youth, now *withering* on the ground,
Another race the following spring supplies;
They fall successive, and successive *rise*:

blast, and other leaves lift their green heads on high."

Did thy beauty last, O Ryno ²⁴ ! Stood the

So generations in their course *decay* ;

So flourish these, when those have *passed away*.

POPE.

The wind strewing the withered leaves on the ground, if omitted, or imperfectly expressed, in Berrathon, is introduced into Oithona, in which the trees strew the threshold with leaves; and inversely, the flower strews its withered leaves on the blast. But the same simile may be found, almost in the same words, in *Ecclesiasticus*: to which Pope's note seems to have directed our translator's attention, as well as mine. 'Ως ΦΥΛΛΟΝ ΘΑΛΛΟΝ ἐπὶ δένδρε δασεὺς, ΤΑΜΕΝ καταβάλλει ἄλλα δὲ ΦΥΕΙ, ὥτως ΓΕΝΕΑ σαρκὸς καὶ αἱματος, ΗΜΕΝ τελευτᾷ ἕτερα δὲ γινέται. As of the *green leaves* on a thick tree, some fall and some grow; so is the generation of flesh and blood; one cometh to an end, and another is born. *Eccl.* xiv. 18. The supposition of a rare coincidence of thought is refuted by a servile adherence to Homer, not only in the words, but in the structure of the sentence; and it is evident, that the son of Sirach, like the father of Ossian, enriched a pretended translation from the Hebrew, with the choicest passages of the Greek poets. But the generations of men compared, with Horace, to the waves of ocean, and, with Homer, to the annual succession of leaves, demonstrates only the want of original genius in us moderns, who can conceive nothing similar, or superior, to the classics, without imitation.

²⁴ Ryno; the son of Fingal, who was killed in Ireland, in the war against Swaran, was remarkable for the beauty of his person, his swiftness, and great exploits. Minvane, the daughter of Morni, and sister to Gaul, was in love with Ryno. Her lamentation over her lover follows.

strength of car-borne Oscar? Fingal himself departed. The halls of his fathers forgot his steps. Shalt thou then remain, thou aged bard! when the mighty have failed? But my fame shall remain, and grow like the oak of Morven; which lifts its broad head to the storm, and rejoices in the course of the wind!

SHE, blushing, sad, from Morven's rocks, bends over the darkly rolling sea. She sees the youth in all their arms. Where, Ryno, where art thou?

Our dark looks told that he was low! That pale the hero flew on clouds! That in the grass of Morven's hills, his feeble voice was heard in wind!

And is the son of Fingal fallen, on Ullin's mossy plains? Strong was the arm that vanquished him! Ah me! I am alone!

Alone I shall not be, ye winds! that lift my dark-brown hair. My sighs shall not long mix with your stream; for I must sleep with Ryno.

I see thee not, with beauty's steps, returning from the chace. The night is round Minvane's love. Dark silence dwells with Ryno.

Where are thy dogs, and where thy bow? Thy shield that was so strong? Thy sword, like heaven's descending fire? The bloody spear of Ryno?

I see them mixed with thy deep ship; I see them stained with blood. No arms are in thy narrow hall, O darkly-dwelling Ryno!

When will the morning come, and say, "Arise, thou king of spears! arise, the hunters are abroad. The hinds are near thee, Ryno!"

Away, thou fair-haired morning, away! the slumbering king

hears thee not ! The hinds bound over his narrow tomb ; for death dwells round young Ryno.

But I will tread softly, my king ! and steal to the bed of thy repose. Minvane will lie in silence, nor disturb the slumbering Ryno.

The maids shall seek me ; but they shall not find me ; they shall follow my departure with songs. But I shall not hear you, O maids : I sleep with fair-haired Ryno. MACPHERSON.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



EDINBURGH :

Printed by JAMES BALLANTYNE.

2v

K

